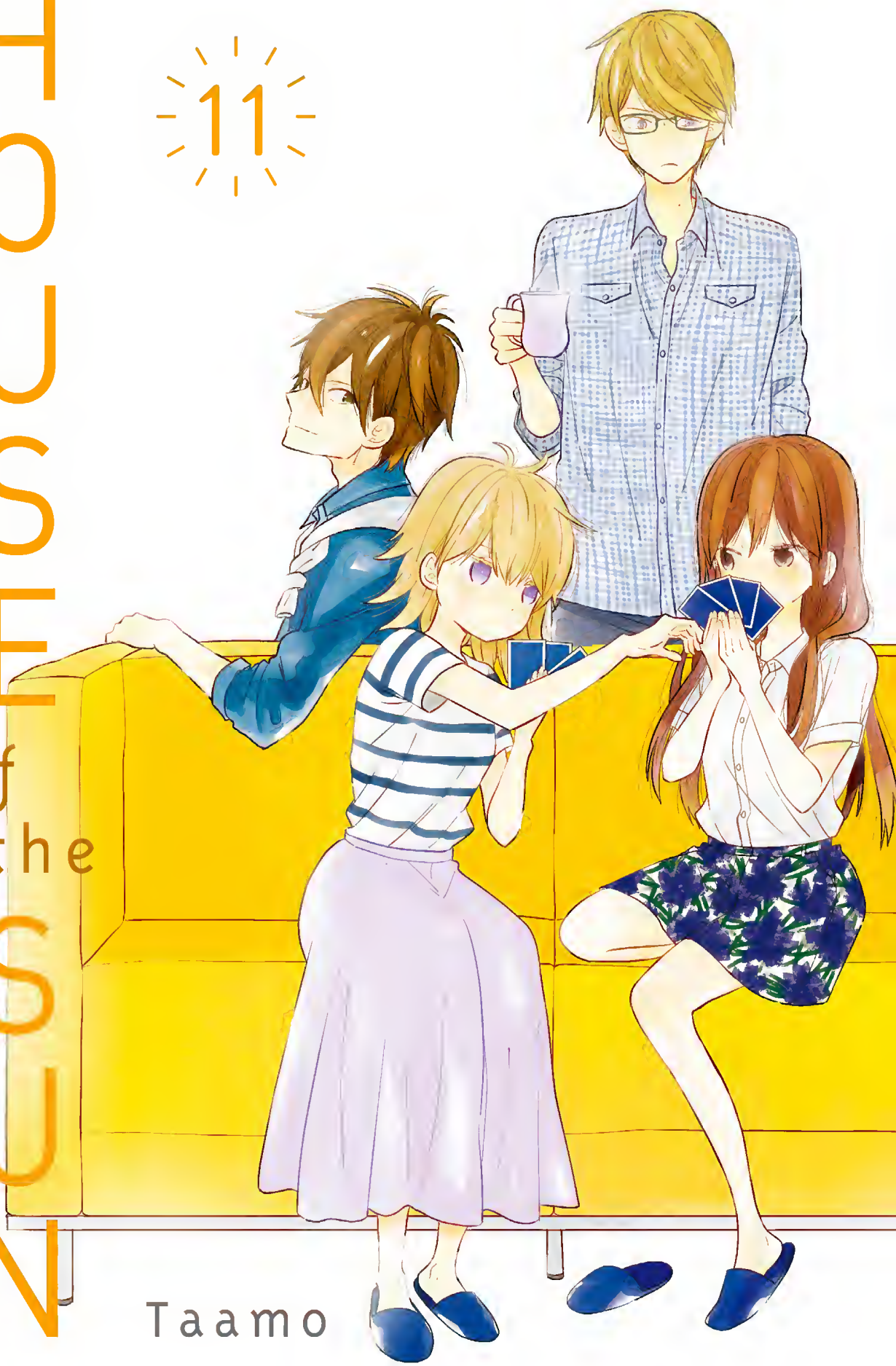
HOUSE of the SUN

11

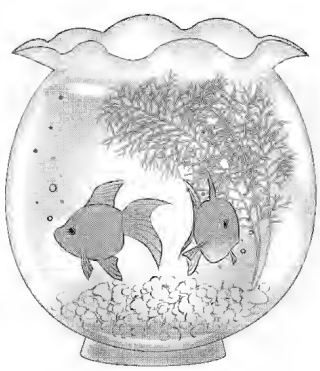


Taamo

HOUSE of the SUN

11

by Taamo



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CHARACTER

Mao Motomiya
Second-year high school student. Without a place to call home, Mao moves into Hiro's house. Mao is secretly writing an online autobiography under the pen name Kukai.

Roommates

Friends

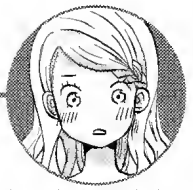
Classmates

Siblings

Hiro Nakamura
Businessman with housewife tendencies. Mao's childhood friend. He's been working to protect their home ever since his parents died in his third year of high school. He's watching over the house, hoping to once again live with his sister and brother.

Brothers

Siblings



Chi-chan (Chihiro)
Mao's friend. She likes Oda-kun and confessed to him, but was turned down. Her second attack on him was successful. ♡

Oda-kun
Mao's classmate since first year. Had a thing for Mao, but was rejected and is heartbroken. He's started dating Chihiro.

Hina Nakamura
Hiro and Daiki's younger sister. A third-year middle schooler preparing for exams. She lives in Sendai with an aunt.

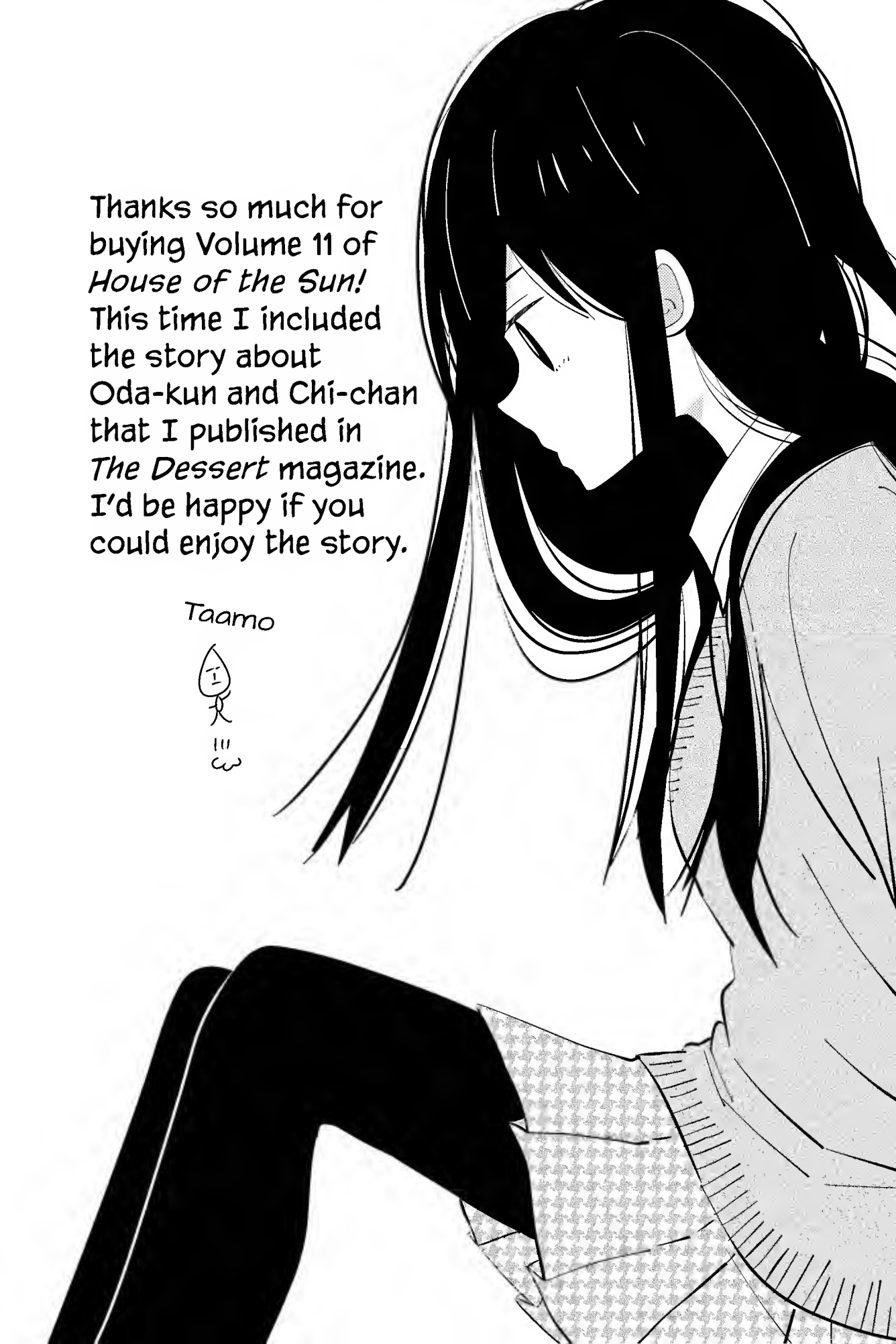
Daiki Nakamura
Hiro's little brother. In his second year of high school. He moved in with an uncle after their parents died, but he has decided to return to the Nakamura house. He's in the same class as Mao.

STORY

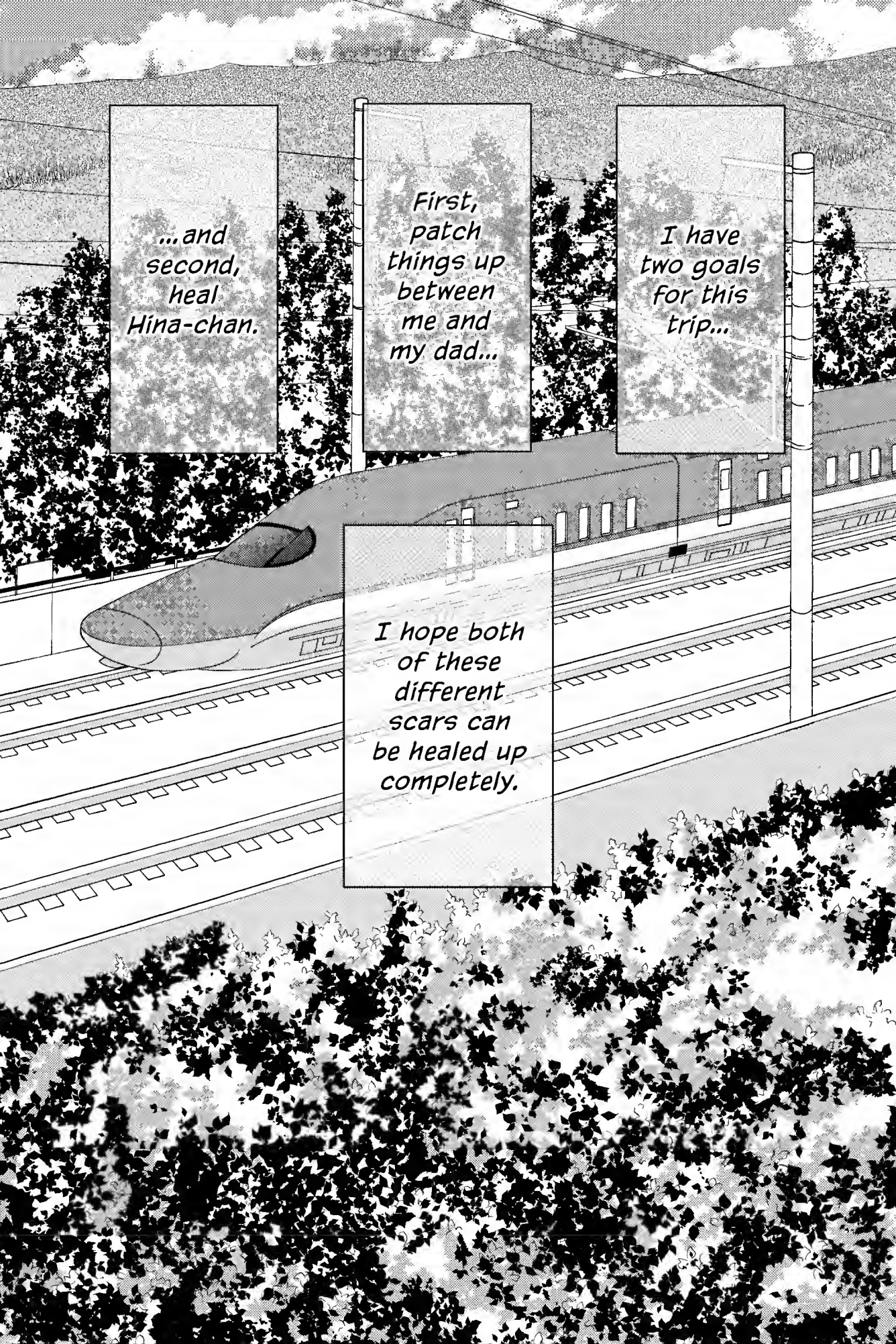
After her father gets remarried, Mao feels like she no longer has a home. Aiming for independence, she's now staying with her childhood friend Hiro and his younger brother Daiki.

Mao has feelings for Hiro, who is unfailingly kind to her, but one day, Daiki confesses his love to her. She's unable to return his feelings, so he decides to simply watch over her from that point on.

Hiro wishes for Mao to someday return to her house, and Mao wishes for the last of the Nakamura family, Hiro's sister Hina, to return home. For each of their sakes, the Nakamura and Motomiya families are taking a family trip together... What'll happen now?!


Thanks so much for buying Volume 11 of *House of the Sun!* This time I included the story about Oda-kun and Chi-chan that I published in *The Dessert* magazine. I'd be happy if you could enjoy the story.

Taamo

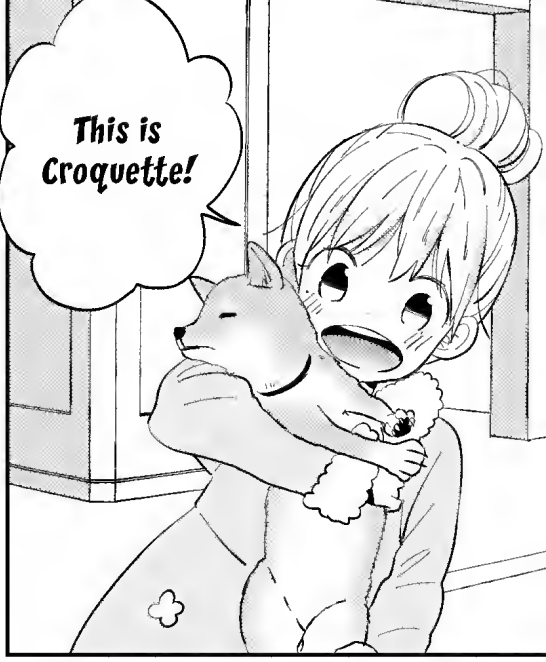

I have two goals for this trip...
First, patch things up between me and my dad...
...and second, heal Hina-chan.
I hope both of these different scars can be healed up completely.

All right, that's everyone.
Ready to go, Hina?

NOD

...
Have you caught a cold or anything, Hina?
I see! You do look well!
...
SHIVER SHIVER
ガタガタ
...
Seriously, though, Sendai's cold.
It was cold the last time I was here, but it's even colder now.
...
I bet the weather's really pleasant here in the summer.
Oh, and the mashed edamame and beef tongue are delicious!
Beef tongue's a little salty, though.
Have you seen the castle ruins before, Hina?
There's not much there, huh?
...
Croquette?
H-Hina-chan, the dog's here!

I wanted to meet her.
I'm happy...


This is Croquette!

Wanna hold her?
PANT PANT PANT
ヘっヘっヘっヘっ

SQUEEE

...
Every night my whole body hurts.
That means you'll get taller.
You're getting tall.
Hey, hey, isn't Croquette cute?!
Yeah.
Yeah ...
That's what being ignored is, Hiro!
Yeah ...
We have to do our best, even if it doesn't pay off!
Huh?!
Daiki, you're so well-informed.
Aah, I had no idea that Sendai had such a history
Daiki, you need to cooperate with Hiro.

Hina-chan said she wanted to go, too.
But why didn't you change the course for me?
I get the sense that I was here just a few months ago...
It's not your imagination.
It was written on your trip plans.
And after this, we're also going to the Zuihouden Mausoleum, which you have also already seen.
This is targeted!
I know this...
This long stairway.
I know this place...

Last time, Hiro must have been here with Radical-san...
I wonder...
...how Radical-san is doing.
Phew... It's as gaudy as ever. That must be how Date Masamune's tastes ran.
SHRUG
There's no mallow leaf crest, though.
The Tokugawa family was in control of the Date family at the time, and they would not have allowed the mallow leaf crest.
Don't answer so seriously, Daiki! I was just making a reference to the Mito Komon mallow crest!

...to shrink this distance.

...know how...

I don't...

This beef tongue is great.
ドオオオーン
DOOOOOM
What's with that mood?
Why don't you have a little fun on vacation?
But this seating arrangement ...
...just screams that we're making no progress!

Yeah.
I know that's true.
You two are rushing too much.
The bond between family members is stronger than you think it is.
Talking to each other can come next.
Being together is the most important part.

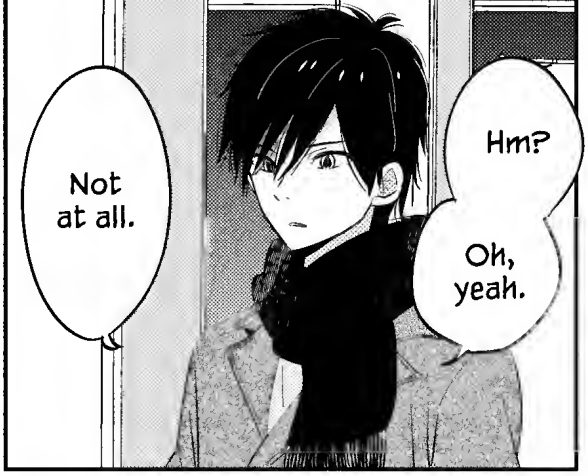
Sorry that this is how our first trip together is going.
Let's be sure to enjoy our trip.
Daiki's right.
Huh? Are you pretend-ing this is golf?
FORE!

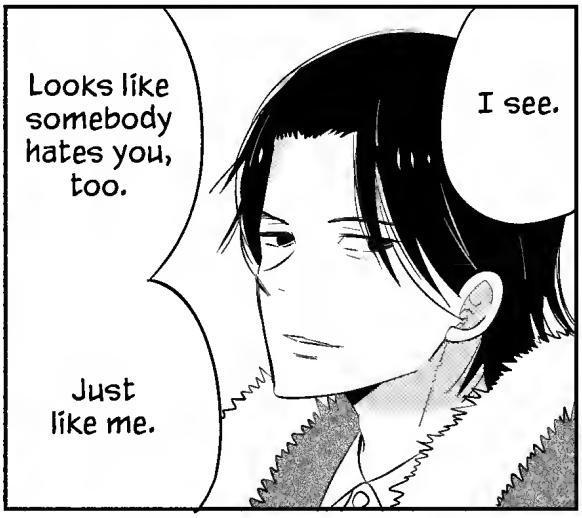
Thanks for coming along with us.
Okay!
Mao-chan, they say we can choose our *yukata*.
This color is cute
きゃい
CHATTER
わい
YAY

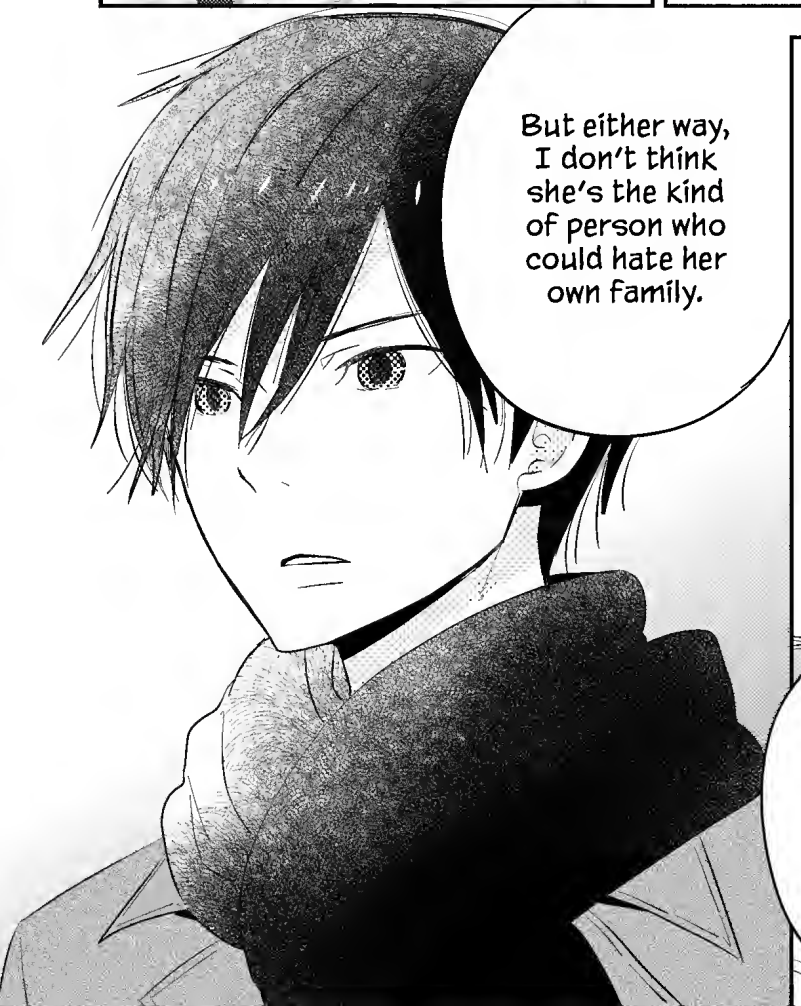
Sorry about that.
You don't have to thank me for every little thing.

... never come home since back then?
...
Has Hina-chan...

Um...
...


Not at all.
Hm?
Oh, yeah.


Looks like somebody hates you, too.
I see.
Just like me.

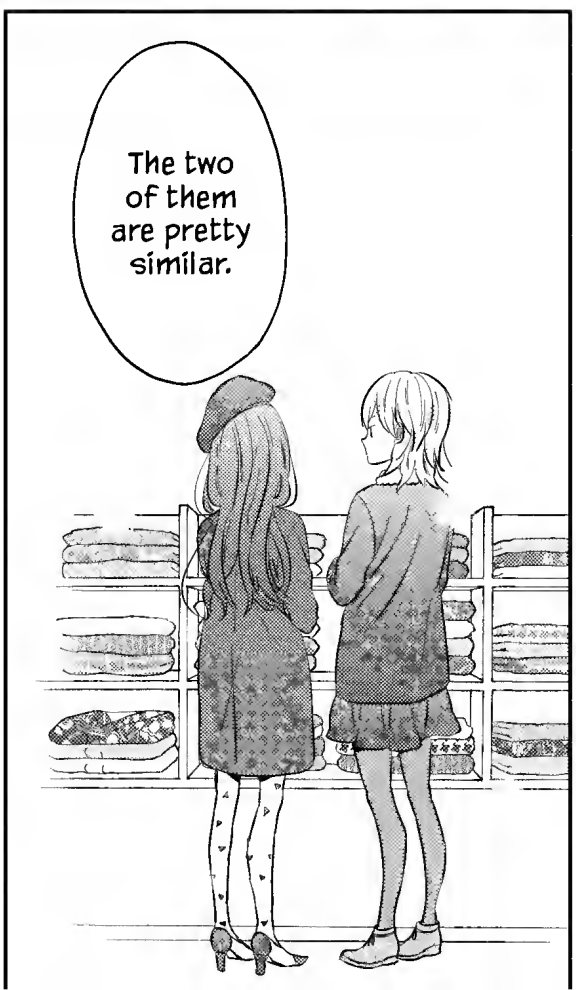

But either way, I don't think she's the kind of person who could hate her own family.

Mao-san is awkward, and she has her little problems, but...
Actually, maybe they're big problems.

Do you love Mao?
N-!!
...
Yes.

Maybe so...
Then I guess you've got a biased opinion.
I can't go along with it.
Huh...

But I actually said it hoping that Hina might be the same way.


The two of them are pretty similar.

Mao-chan...
...how is it with Hiro?

How strange...
Well, I like Daiki better.
Oh, really?

I-
It's nothing at all!

Y-
Yes.
Don't just say "yes."

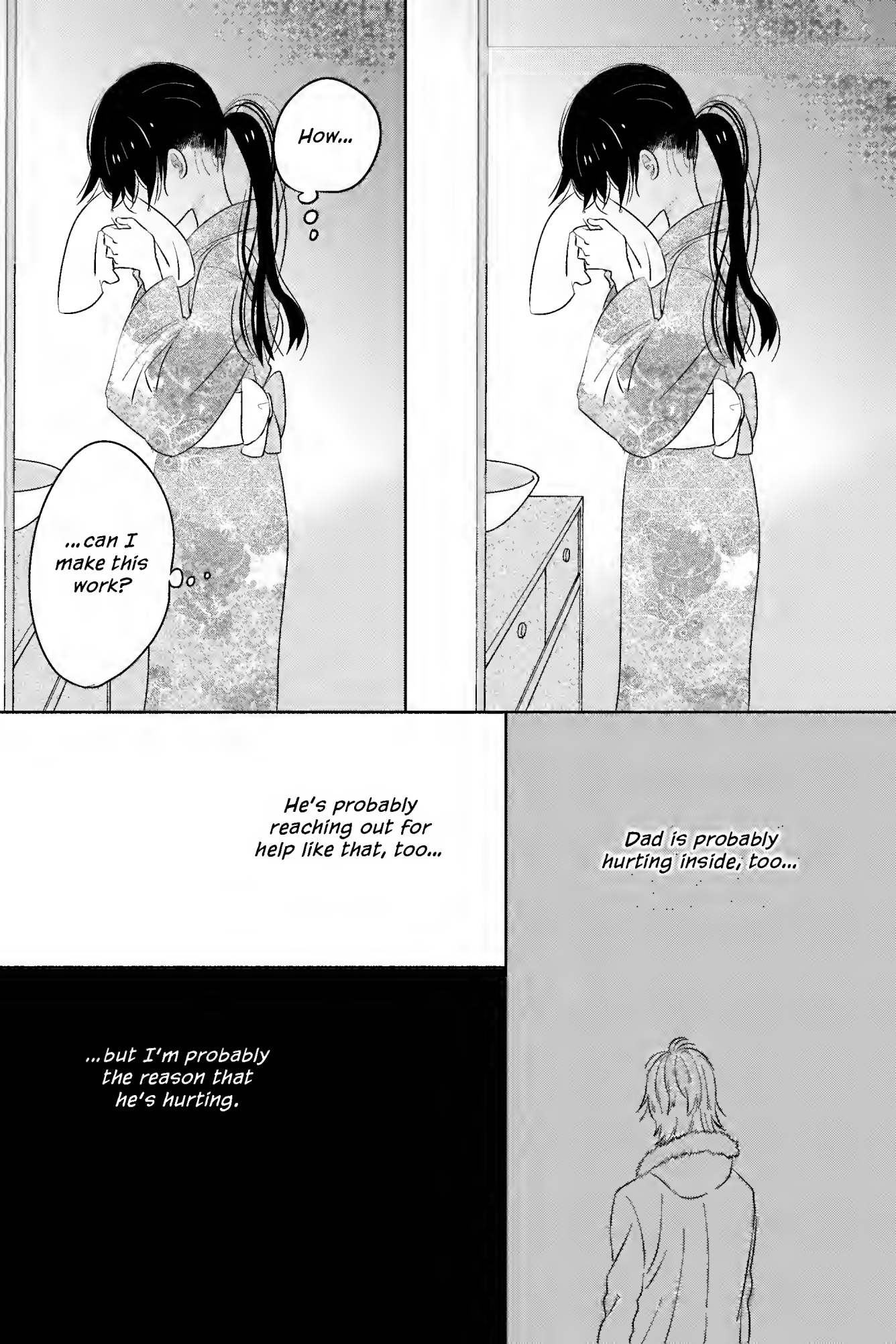
...you don't have to act so stiff with me.
Hey, you know...

Mao-chan...
Did something happen between you and Hiro?
...
No, nothing, it's a misunder-standing!
Oh, I'm sorry. You didn't know.
SPLSH
ちゃぷん
I said misunder-standing ...
...but I like him.
BLUB BLUB BLUB
プクプクプク
Oh, but he turned me down, so no worries!

I'm sorry... I did something like that while you weren't around.
And I won't come home, so...
...don't worry about it.
Why apologize?
I'm happy for you.
Hina-chan...
...is there a reason you won't... um...?
I killed them.

Wh-?
My mom and dad.
I'm the one who killed them.

FSHHHHH
I was totally unable to say anything...
...but I know it wouldn't have made a difference.
I wonder if Hiro knows...
...that she thinks that way?
Hina-chan's probably ...
...never told Hiro or Daiki.
But I can't tell them for her.


How...
...can I make this work?
He's probably reaching out for help like that, too...
Dad is probably hurting inside, too...
...but I'm probably the reason that he's hurting.

So, in that case...
...what can I do to make this work?
Mao, aren't you gonna buy souvenirs?
They have those tasty treats from back in the room...
How about those Hagi no Tsuki cakes, maybe?
Oh, are sweet things okay?

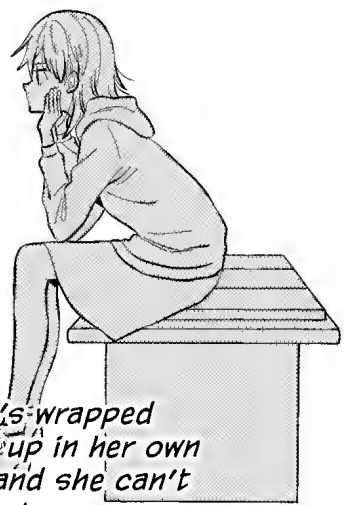
Mao-chan seems down.
Why not say some-thing?
Huh?
...
Don't you think now's a good time?
Yesterday ...
...in the bath, Hina-chan said...
...that she was the one who killed her parents.
I'm sure she's upset after hearing something like that.

Her parents actually died in an accident, didn't they?
How could she think that?

She must have been...
... so over-whelmed by her great sadness ...
... that the hatred built up inside her with nowhere else to go.

And for her, there was no other target but herself.

Is she like Mao?

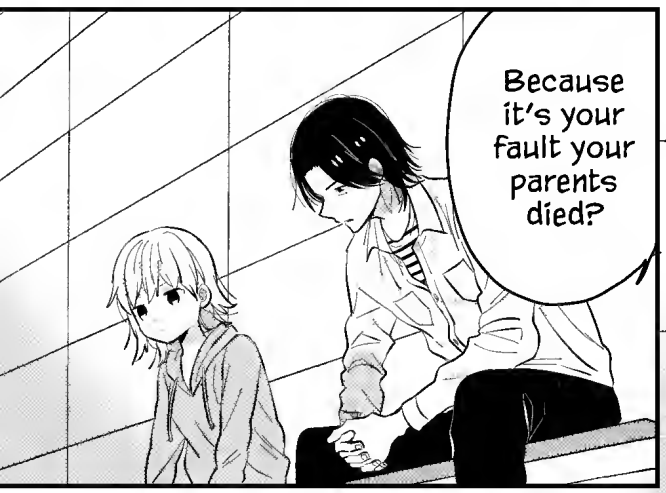


She's wrapped herself up in her own shell, and she can't get out anymore.

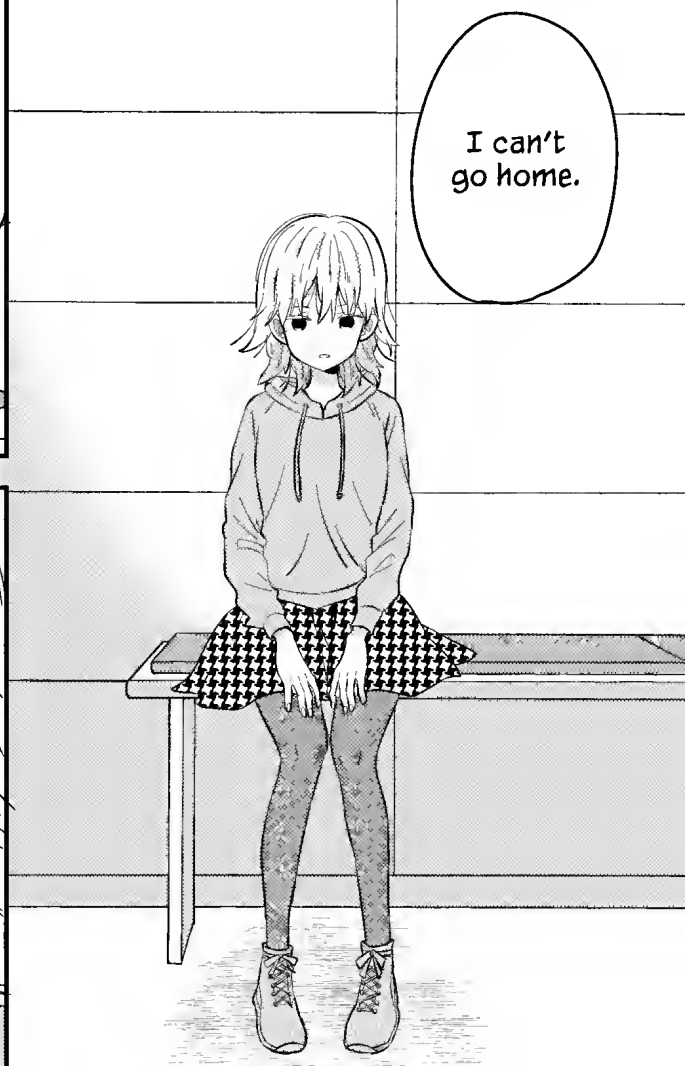
Just like me.

...
I live here.
You don't wanna look at souvenirs, Hina-chan?
I wanted to see...
...Hiro and Dai-chan.
Having to take a vacation in your hometown, what a disaster.
Oh, yeah, that's right.

I won't go back.
...Well, then, why don't you just go home?

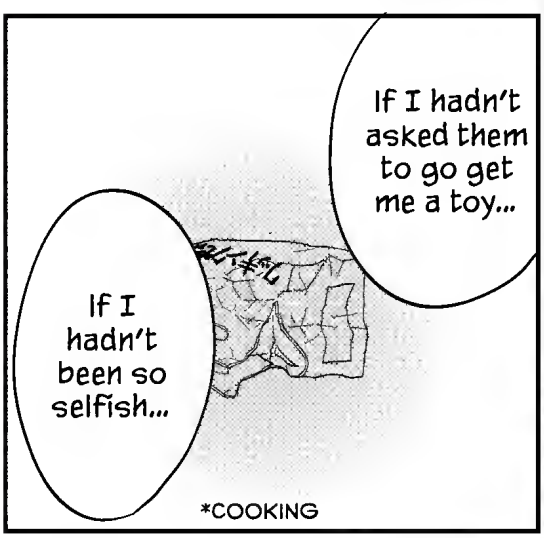

Because it's your fault your parents died?

NOD


I can't go home.

...

Wouldn't it be better if you stopped thinking that way?

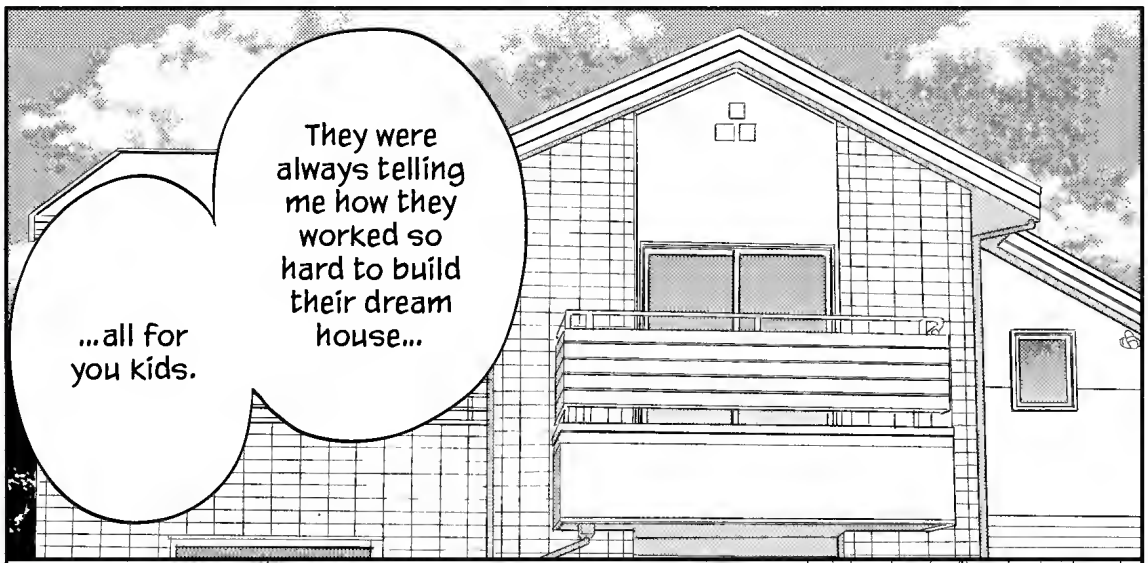

If I hadn't asked them to go get me a toy...
If I hadn't been so selfish...
*COOKING

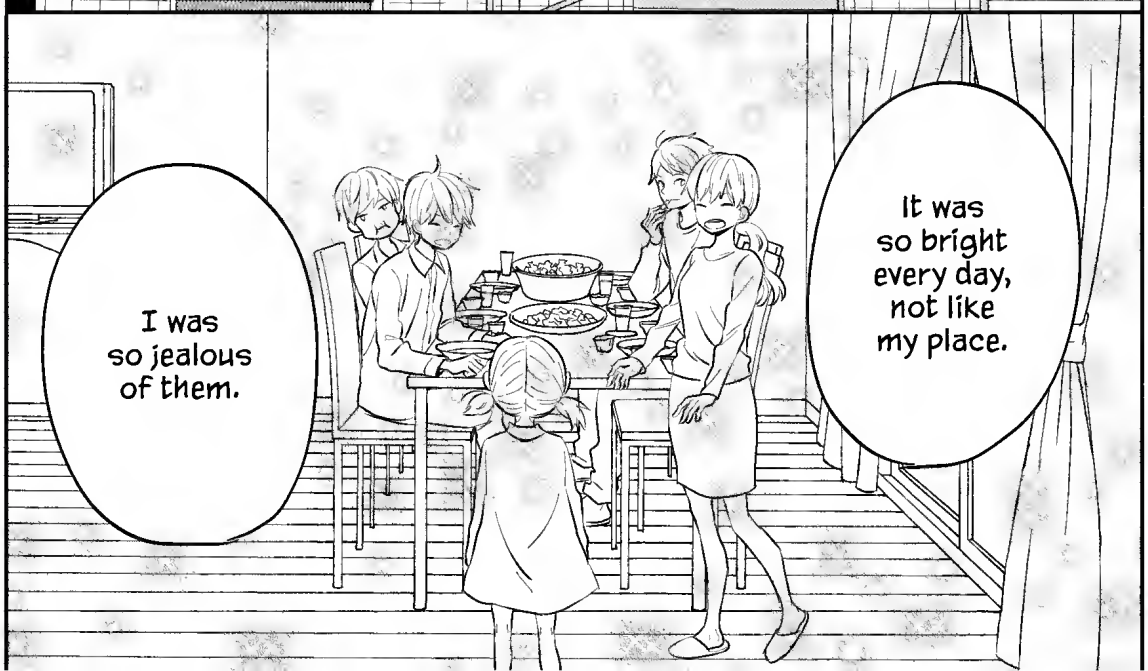
Sorry. I don't know why I'm telling you this...

...this would never have happened.

Maybe because...
...you and I are alike.

You know, your parents...
...loved you so very much.
Maybe it'd make you sad to think about it now.


They were always telling me how they worked so hard to build their dream house...
...all for you kids.

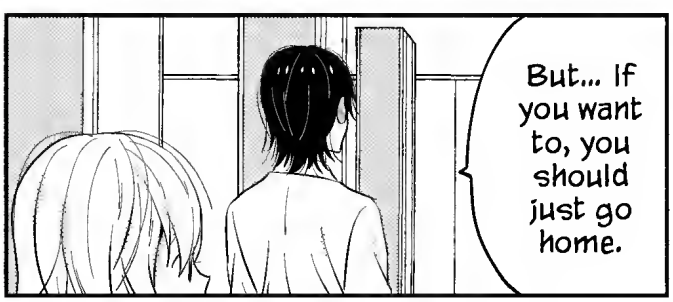

It was so bright every day, not like my place.
I was so jealous of them.

Hina-chan...
Parents ...
...are happy to follow their children's whims.

They were bright...
And Mao was always over there.
So much that I hated it.
Yeah... You were always asking Mao to come over, Hina-chan.
Maybe that's why she didn't end up all messed up.

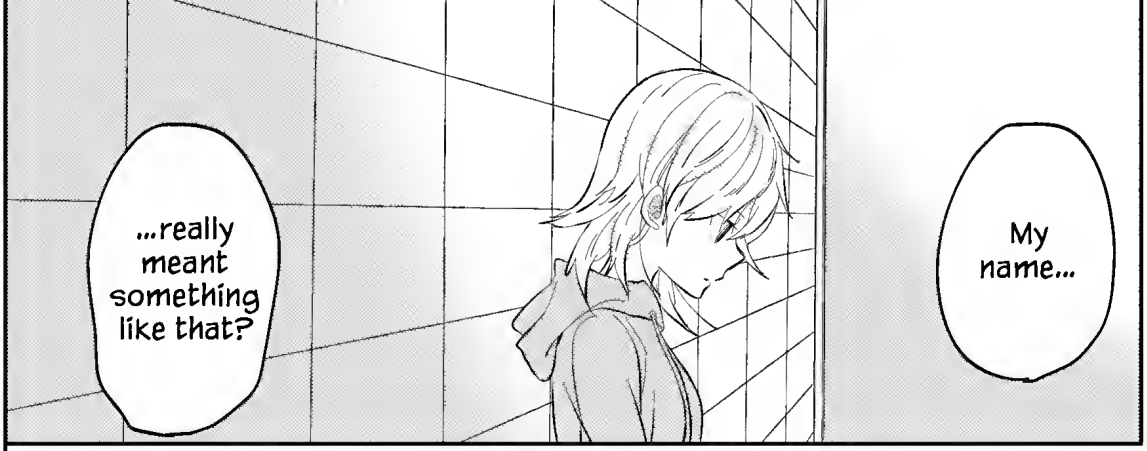
So I think, if they knew that you thought it was your fault that they died...
...they'd hardly be able to stand leaving you behind.
Grateful for them, even.
Yeah, well...
Ha ha..
You got me.
Of course, I might not be the most convincing person to say this...
I'm not a good guy.
NOD

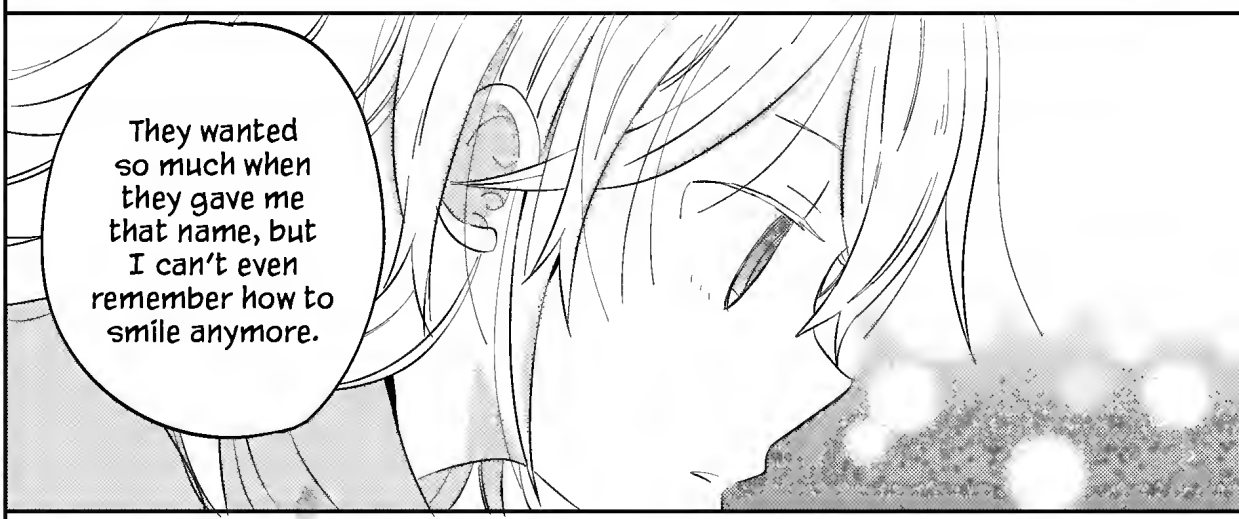
And maybe I was thinking about something convenient like helping myself by helping you, or something.
Like to pay for my sins.
I keep running away.
I can't even face Mao right now, you know.

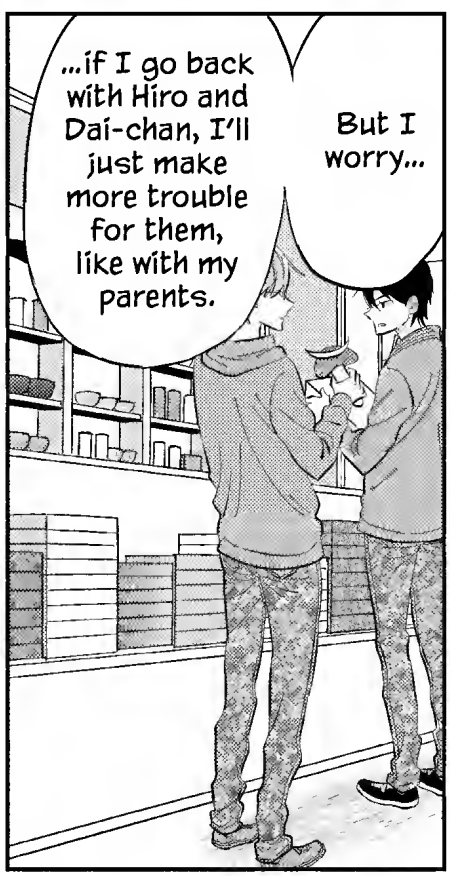

But... If you want to, you should just go home.

I gotta get something to bring back to work as a souvenir.
Well, I should go.

They told me they took the first character of your name from the second character for the sun.
Because they wanted to raise you to be bright and cheerful.
They said it over and over, and I thought it was so dumb.
But a house without part of its sun is not much of a house, is it?

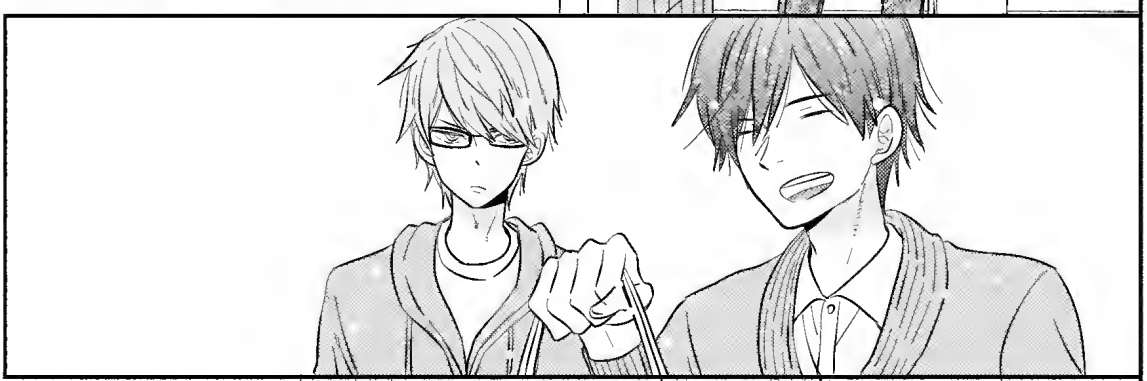

My name...
...really meant something like that?


They wanted so much when they gave me that name, but I can't even remember how to smile anymore.


But I worry...
...if I go back with Hiro and Dai-chan, I'll just make more trouble for them, like with my parents.

Then I get scared ...
I get scared and feel like they'll blame me.
Even though I know better than anyone that they'd never do that.

Hina!
We bought tons of souvenirs from Sendai for your house, too!



Every time they do something kind for me...
...I feel like I'm just going to tear myself apart.

But I...
...really want to go back there... Back home.

They're not gonna blame you...
...Huh?
At some point, Hina-chan started to cry.
And Hiro had such a sad expression on his face.
To me...
...my dad seemed like he might be crying, too.

story 42

Melting and Mixing

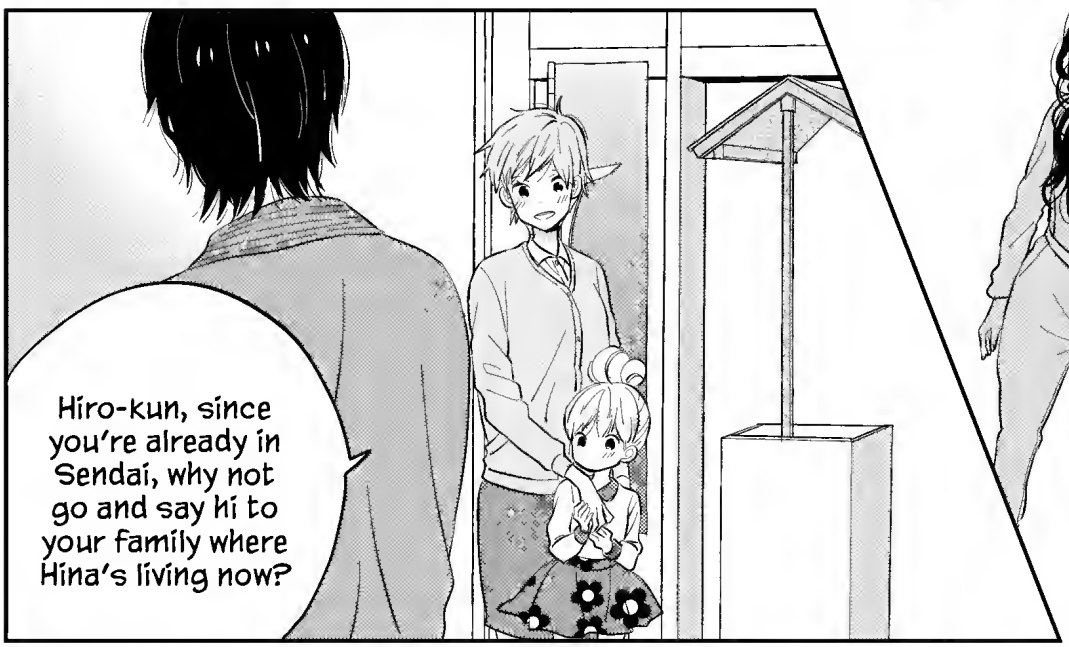
I want to go home...
...and to be with you guys.

Of course. Let's go home, Hina.

HUG
Thank you.

It was like the hand that had comforted me so many times...
....was finally returning to the place where it belonged.
My happiness...
...was mixed up with my loneliness.

I feel so discon-tented in my heart.



GRIP
Thank you very much.
I think we'll do that.
You can do it, Hiro.
NOD
NOD
NOD
We should go try some mashed eda-mame.
It looks good.

Thank you.
You do your best, too, Mao.
Puppy!
Okay, see you later!
Why don't we head out, too?
Okay?

VROOOM
ブロロロ
...
...
I'm sad Croquette's not here, but I'm glad the four of us get to go out together.
Y-yeah.
チラ
GLANCE

...to Hina-chan, I wonder?
What did Dad say...
That's the Osaki Hachi-mangu shrine?
Yes, it is. Shall we go in the back way?
I want us to under-stand each other.
He got Hina-chan to open up her heart...
I want Dad to open up his heart to me.

Oh, is it a festival day? Want to go see?
Mom, there's a festival!
自慢
いかやき
Grilled Squid
Water Candy
HOT DOGS
Apple
Osaka's Famous Takoyaki
たこ焼
Mini Sponge Cake

All right, slow down.

たっ
TMP

There's cotton candy! Mom, I want some!

We don't have to.
We can just call each other later.

Hm?
Don't you want to follow them?

O-oh, okay.

Th-
Then do you want to walk around together?
BA-DUM
ドキ
BA-DUM
ドキ
...
BA-DUM
ドキ
BA-DUM
ドキ
BA-DUM
ドキ
BA-DUM
ドキ
...
Is this...
...a good thing?
焼きそば
ヨーヨー
わたあめ
たこ焼き

This is the first time I've been to a festival with my dad.
I've...
...had a lot ...
... of first experiences this year.
...but now I feel like I've soaked up these important things.
I was once so shallow...
Ah.
So, I think I can work hard for just a bit longer, and not give up.

EXCITED
うずうず
I want to try the shooting game!
BAM
One try, mister!
Okay.
パン POP
パン POP
パン POP
I'll shoot it, and then I can brag to Hiro and Daiki.
スチャ
SQUINT

焼そば
You suck.
Wait, am I bad at this?
This isn't something to brag about. This is self-torture.
First of all, the cork isn't even all the way in.
It's too heavy. You'll never drop it that way.
And you can't aim right at the front of it.

...waited for me.
Dad...
パン
POP
Th-thank...
Here's your prize!
ガタッ
THUNK
Congratu-lations!
カラカラカラー!
DING
ALING
ALING

Thank you, Dad!
Wait, what?
...you ...!
Wait, can I take this?

Dad got me the toy I wanted.
BA-DUM
ドキ
ドキ
BA-DUM
He got it for me. He got it for me.
BA-DUM
ドキ

HUG

I want to catch goldfish next...!
Dad...!
We can't take something like that home and keep it.
Um...
...so I can't?
...

...
I won't take it home...!
おおっ
Oooh!
ひょいひょい
HUP
HUP
HUP
ひょい
PLAP
PLAP
PLAP
I just want to try it with you, Dad...!
Hee hee hee!
You're really good!
...
BLOOSH

Okay, okay.
One more try!
You're already done, mister!
You're way worse than that lady!!
HUP
ひぃ
ひぃ
HUP
Shut up, kid.
ばしゃ
SPLSH
You suck, Dad.
I haven't done this since I was a kid.
Go for the little fish, and use the edge of the net to get them.
Also, this thing has two sides, I guess.

That one looks pretty easy to catch.
ひょいっ
FWOOSH
I got it!
おおー
OOOH
Did you see that, Mao?!
Huh ...?!
Y- yeah.
...

チャラランラン♪
RING
ALING
ALING
LING
...
...
Yui wants to come catch goldfish, too.
トン
TMP
...
Yeah, hey.
Right now? We're catching goldfish.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Then, let's wait for them.
O-
Oh...

...
...
...
D-Dad...
I'm...
ギュウ
SQUEEZE
...
I'm glad you got me a Chonmame in the shooting game.
I'm really happy I got to go to this festival with you.
I'm happy we could try goldfish catching together.

...
...This again.
...I want to thank you for talking to Hina-chan today.
And also...
You're always so focused on the Nakamura family...
All...
...the god-damn...
...time.

You threw our home away.
...
That's not what I meant.
Hiro's house is just really important to me.
But being with you... is more important.
...there just wasn't a place for me at home anymore.
But...

...Huh?
You threw it away!
You left me!
Just like she did!

I really did hurt Dad, didn't I?

I did the same thing that Mom did.

Even though I knew it, I wouldn't let myself think it.
I'm dishonest, and I'm weak.
I knew you would probably end up hating me.
Hating you...?
There were a lot of times when I was lonely...
...but I never once hated you.

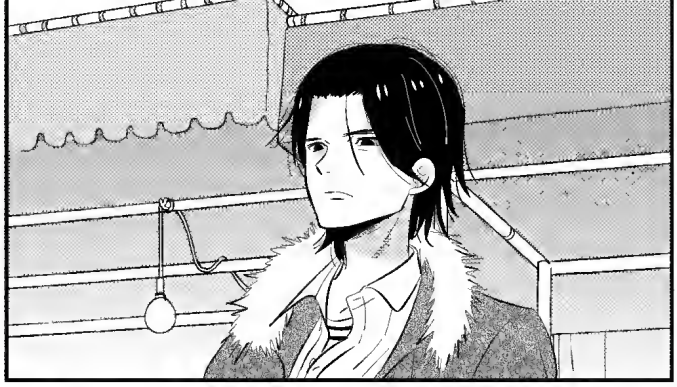
Aaaah! あ!
I spotted Dad and Mao!
焼きそば
TUG
ぎゅう
Did you catch goldfish?
You serious...?
I was so so lonely...
...because Yui and Mom took you away from me.
But...
...it looks like you felt the same way.

We put them back.
Huh? Why?!
Well, obviously, they're gonna have more fun with all their friends.

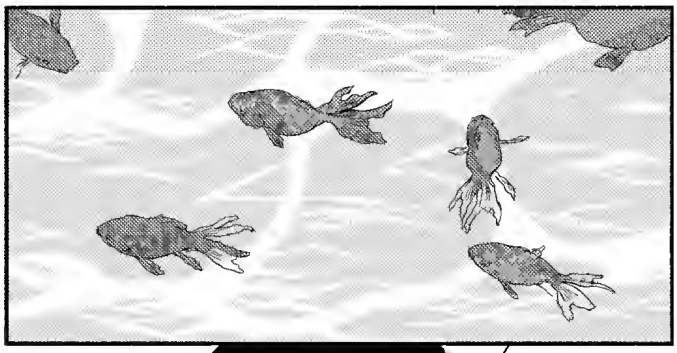
When you were at Hiro-kun's place, you were never lonely. Is that right?

Mao...

HMPH
NOD
I just can't win...
No matter how long it's been, I can't beat that place.
"I don't think she's the kind of person who could hate her own family."
"I know better than anyone that they'd never blame me."



No worries. Our house will be bright, too.
With these three girls in it.



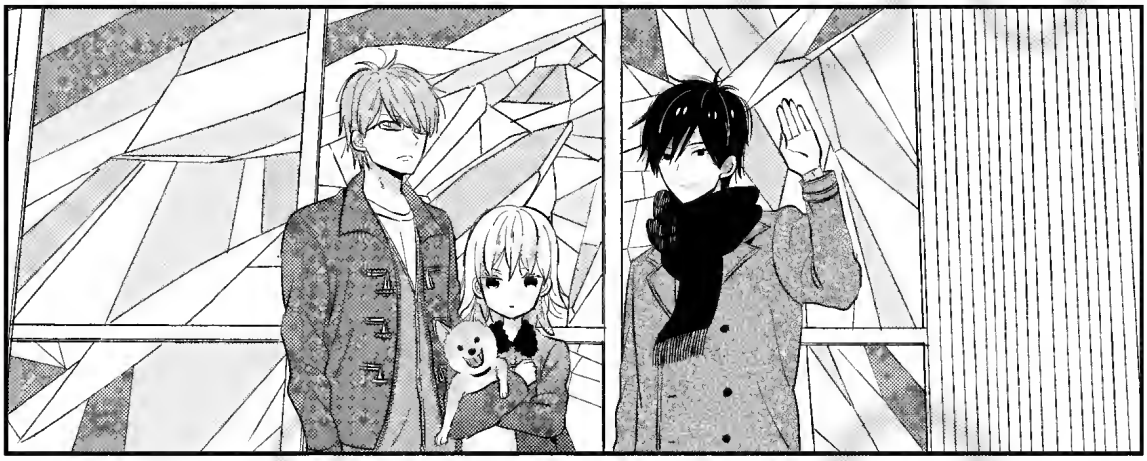
Yeah!
Right?

...Then let's all go home together.

Are you sure?
Really ?!
I didn't hear wrong?

Y-you mean me, too?

Come home with us...
...Mao.



たっ
TMP

H-Hiro...
I- I'm...
I'm...

...going to be able to go home.
I'm so happy for you...
...Mao.
仙台駅

story 43

Treasure

...Mao.

Come home with us...

This is the end...

...of my time with Hiro.

KACHK
カチ
KACHK
カチ
You've been cleaning since morning, Mao?
Yep.
Since my dad asked me to come home...
...I wanted to do it as fast as possible.

But Hina-chan won't be coming home until she starts high school, right...?
So you and Daiki will be alone for a bit, huh.
Good idea.
Yeah.
I guess you have to rewrite the chore board, huh.
...
...

But Daiki and I are still on winter break!
Are you bragging?!
All right, get going, corporate slave!
You have work today, right?
Where'd you learn that term?
PUSH
PUSH
...
KACHK
Then, I'm off to work.
I'll only be able to see him off like this for a little bit longer...
Yep, have a good day.

Morning, Mao.
Hiro's at work?
Ah, Daiki, are you free today ?!
Morn-ing.
Yeah, he just left.

I guess?
I just have work this evening.
Teach me how to make Salisbury steak!
Why are you asking now?!
I never wanted to admit that you were better than me...
...so I couldn't ask you to teach me.

The two of you have taken good care of me.
So I wanted to, at the very least, make you guys some tasty Salisbury steak before I go.
I was planning on having a surprise party.
...for her own surprise party she's planning for herself.
I feel like she's asking me to teach her how to make the dinner...
Sure.
In return, you have to come back and make it again if it turns out well.
Th-thank you Daiki!

Sure.
...
ホヘロ
SPLAT
I made it just the way you said...
しゅーん
DOWN
So it's MY fault?!
How?!
Let's just eat this...
...and then I'll try again!
Time to eat.
...
She refuses to take responsi-bility...
Don't tell me you're crying, Daiki...

...they always eat the whole thing.

They complain, but...

Always.

Not just that time...

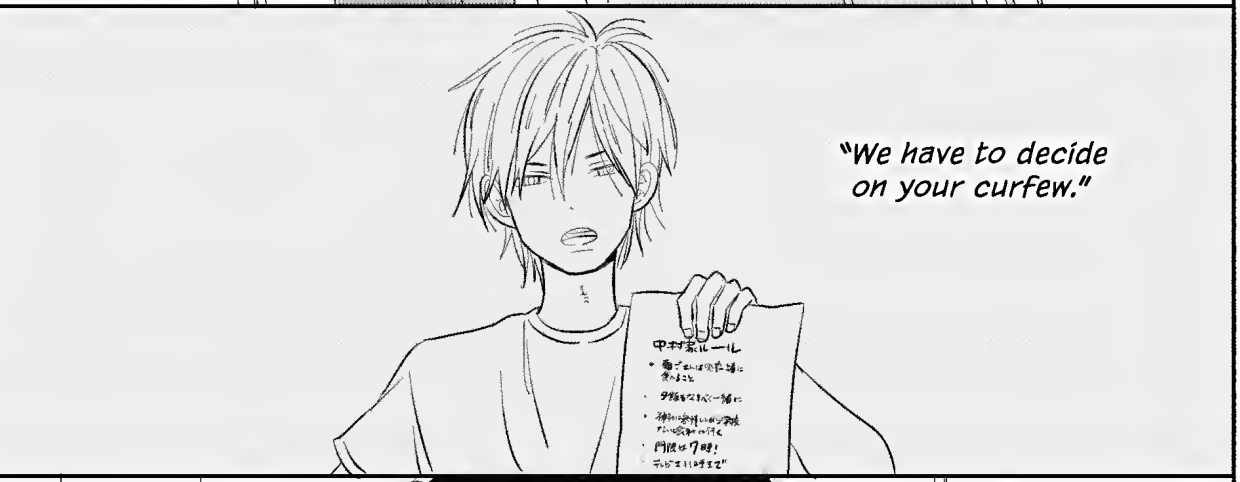
It's so stinky.
It's suuuper bad.
"You're way too awful at cooking."

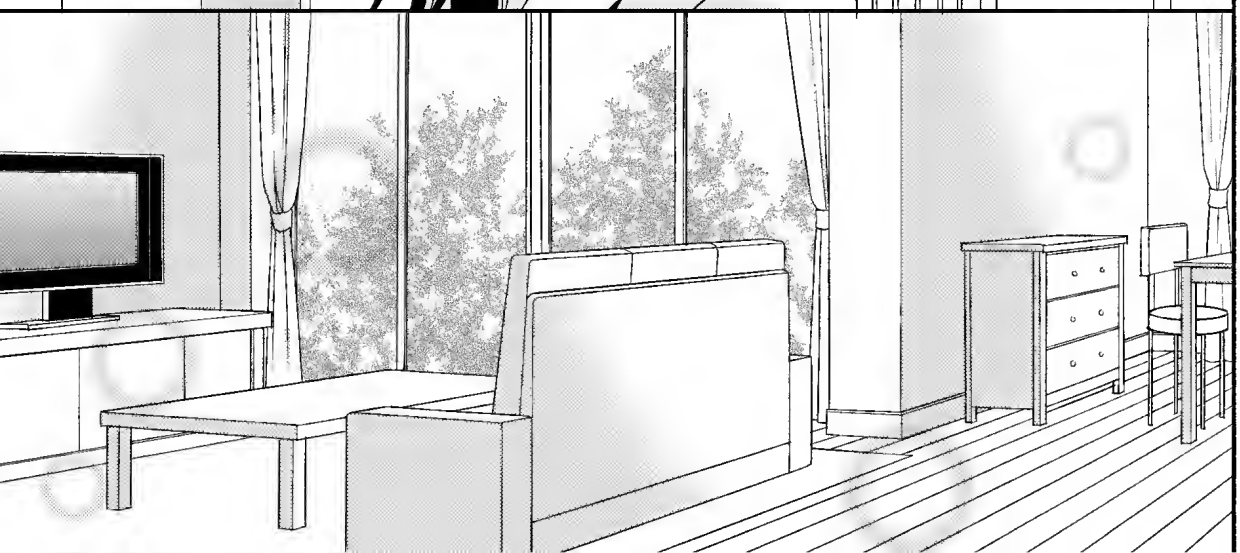
I'll just try it alone, then.
Oh, well...

Huh? Daiki?
Did you pass out?
SNORE

KACHK
カチャ

HMPH


"We have to decide on your curfew."
中村家ルール



I thought I'd just changed to running away to here.

I'd created a place to escape to in the novel that I was writing online.

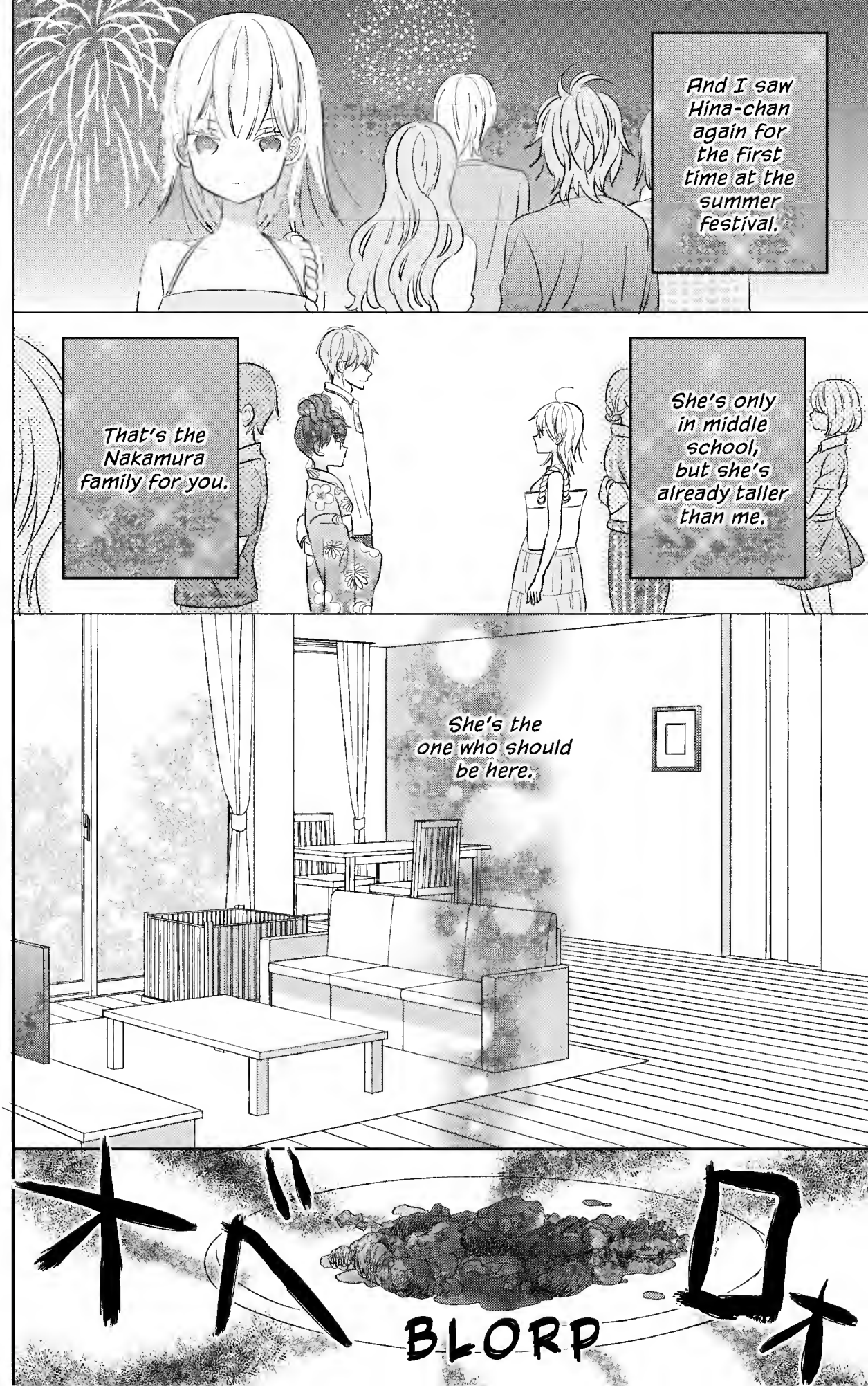
I did run away...
...but...
Speaking of the novel, that was also about the time that I met Radical-san.
...I managed to get something from this place that I wasn't getting...
"I really am a huge fan."
"I'm so happy! I can't believe I'm meeting the famous Kuukai-san!"
...from my novel.
"...fall in love?"
"Did you, perhaps..."

...but I'd like to finish the story someday.
There's no reason for me to run away into my novel anymore...
...you so much for always...
...reading my story.
Thank...
...like it was yesterday, too.
I remember my first date with Hiro...
I was so happy he bought me that Chonmame as a present.

...that it felt like it went on forever.
It was the first time I was so happy...
Come in already!
What are you doing out there?
And Daiki came back for a little bit during summer break.
I thought he would tell me to get out.
As long as you're in this house, you're family, too, Mao.

You just hide.
I'll go...
Daiki was always so kind to me.
The summer festival ...
The grave visit...

Christmas...
New Year's...
Those two...
...always took me in without complaint, treated me just like family.


And I saw Hina-chan again for the first time at the summer festival.
That's the Nakamura family for you.
She's only in middle school, but she's already taller than me.
She's the one who should be here.
BLORP

Urgh...
Another failure...
...I guess I really need Daiki's teaching.
But he's still sleeping.
POKE
POKE
He must be tired from the trip...
...right, Croquette?
Wakaba-chan is here, too?
Hiro's going to need you to keep him company during evening drinks, okay?
So many...
... things have happened here.

WHOO
AA
FWISH

I love my big sister.
come play again.
Come home soon.

That day...
...and the rest.

All of them...

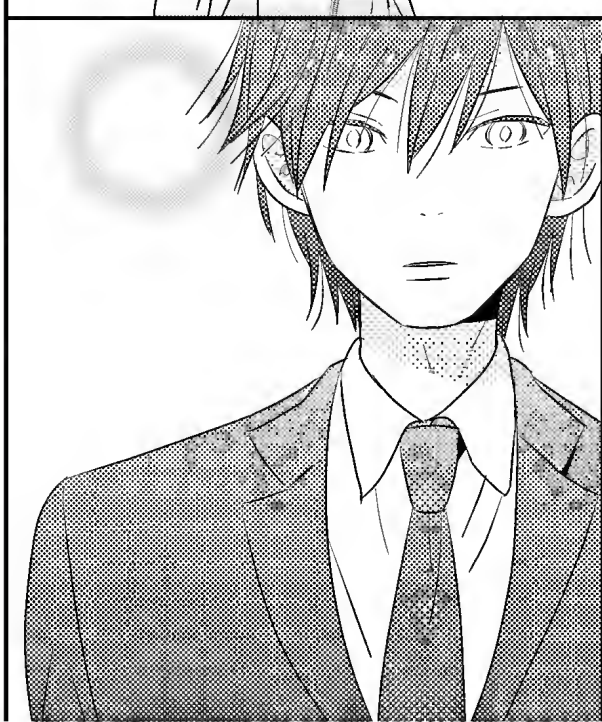
...are my treasures.

ぱた
TMP
ぱた
TMP
Welcome home.

I'm home.
パタン
KLAK

そわっ
SHIVER

Where's Daiki? At work?
Yeah.



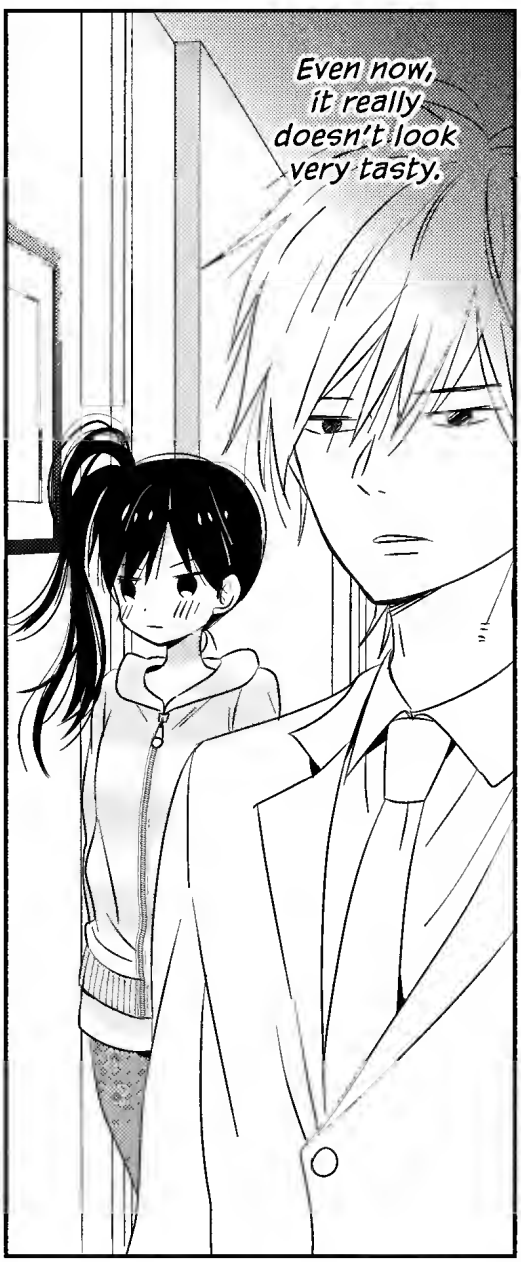
Wh- what is it?
I set up a surprise party!
If it's a surprise, why are you telling me?

FUNK
もわぁ…

Sorry... I sucked 'til the end.
We can eat when Daiki gets back home.

...

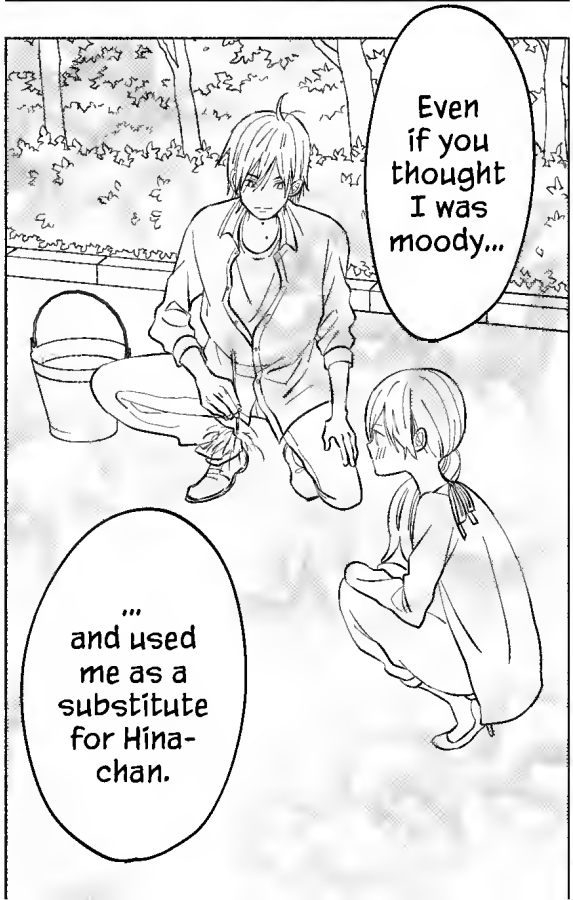
Don't say "the end."


Even now, it really doesn't look very tasty.

...
You're gonna have to take my days to cook off the schedule!
And I won't be making a mess, so it'll be easier to clean!
There'll be fewer clothes and things to wash.
And there won't be as much of a wait for the toilet and the bath.
Without me, you'll get to eat delicious food every day.
And also—
I'll be lonely.
I'll be lonely...
...without you around.

But still...
...you'll be able to go back to having a normal life.
I'm happy for you...
...honestly.

Thank you so much...
...for inviting me into your home.


Even if you thought I was moody...
... and used me as a substitute for Hina-chan.

Thank you, Hiro.

I won't run anymore.
I'll hold my head high when I go home.
Welcome Home
おかえりなさい
You were my savior.
You supported me.
And I got stronger.

It hurts.
Sorry.
The time we spent living together was very special to me.
Thanks.

It's actually a new beginning, right?
But don't talk about it like it's the end.

SCRUNCH
キュッ

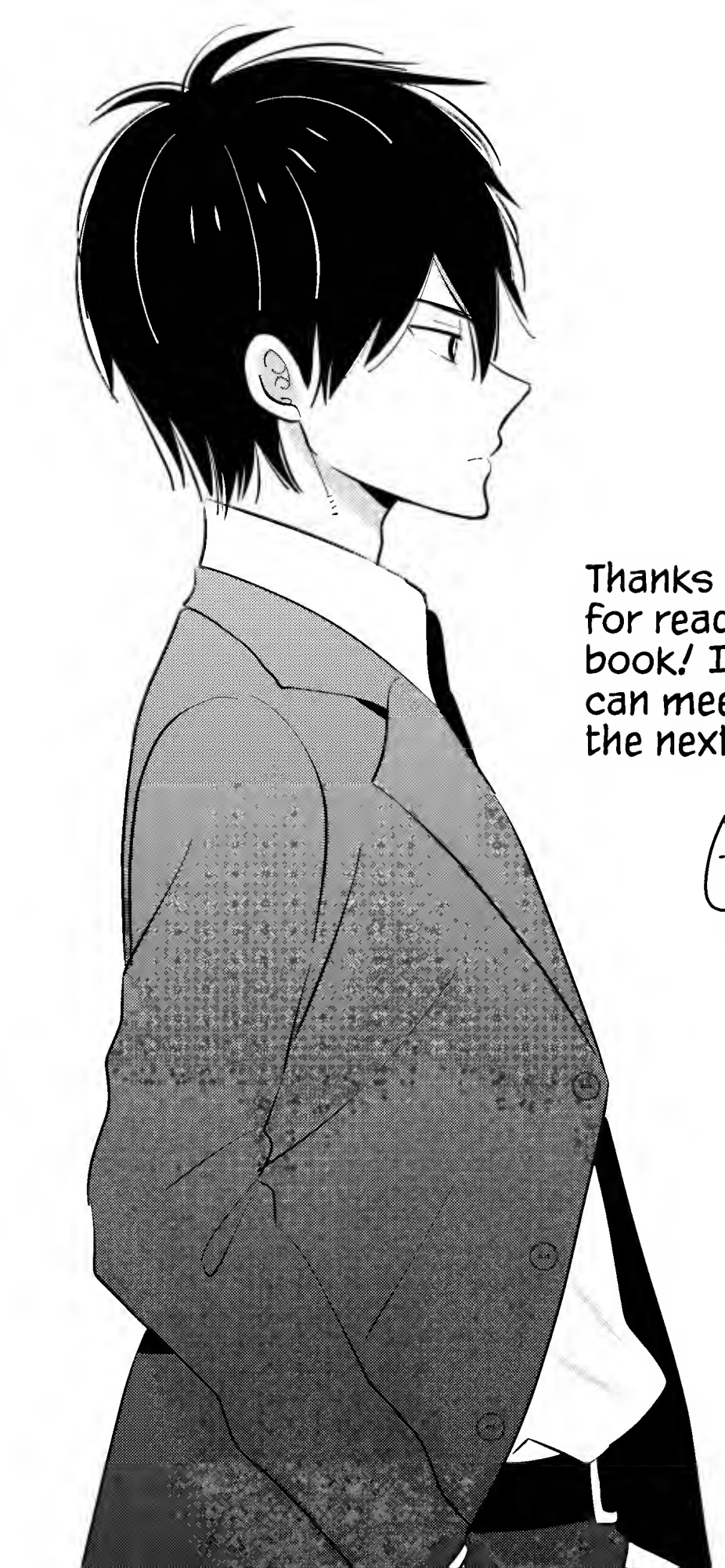
After you go home, I'm gonna have to talk to you.
SLAP
ペチ
OW!

Okay.
Thank you for everything.
Cro-quette ...
Yup.
I'll see you at school, Daiki.

Hiro, tell Hina-chan to take care.
Yeah.
...
RUB
RUB
RUB
RUB
I'm gonna come see you, so...
...be good.
...
Bye! Stay safe!
FWISH
Mao...!

Thank you!
See you later!

story 44
Beginning



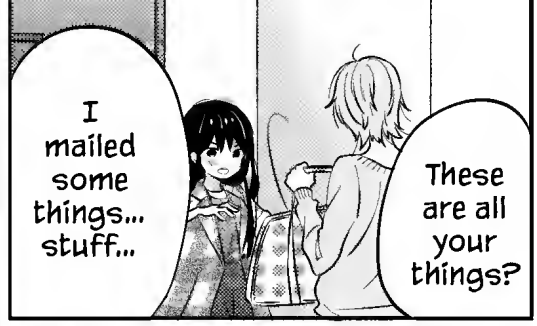
Thanks so much for reading my book! I hope we can meet again in the next volume.

Taamo

I-
I'm home.

Welcome home!

...
Welcome back.



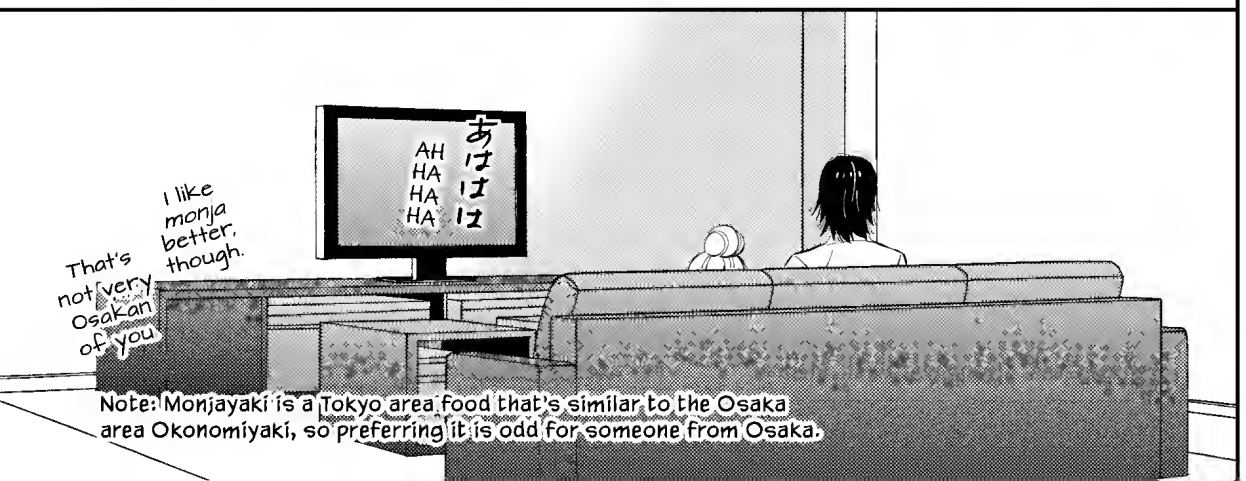
Thanks so much for coming home.

I'm back.
...
Sorry.
I'm back.
...and from when I visited here from Hiro's house.
This room feels different from when I withdrew here all alone...
ぽすん
PWOF

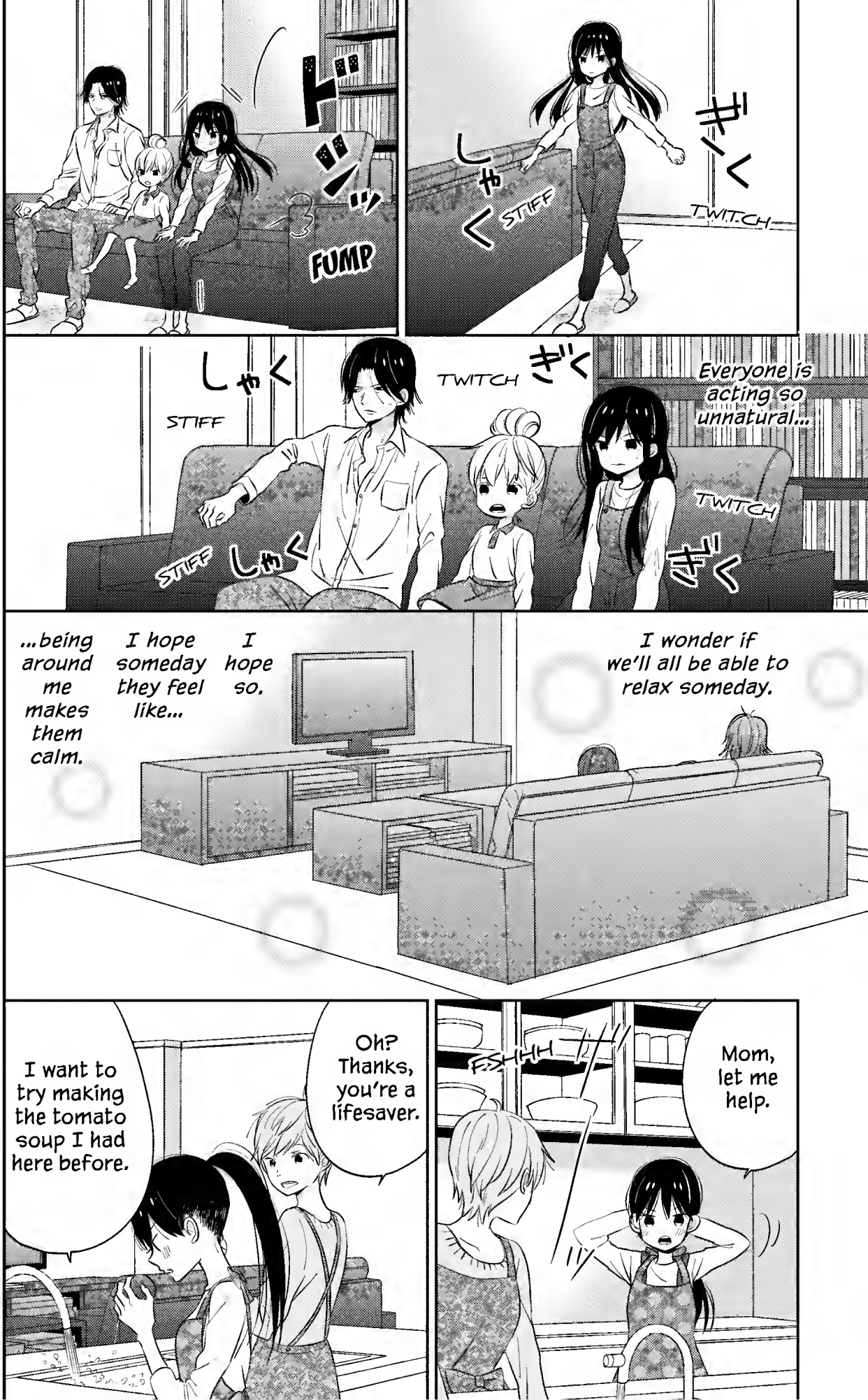
...all the things that happened over at Hiro's place.

...so that I don't forget...

I hope that I can continue to write my novel...



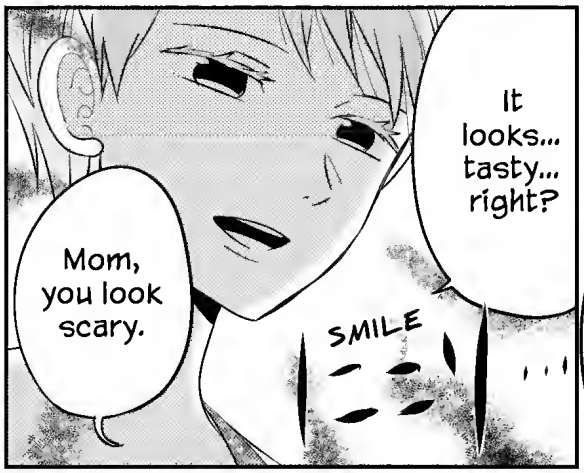
Note: Monjayaki is a Tokyo area food that's similar to the Osaka area Okonomiyaki, so preferring it is odd for someone from Osaka.


ドッ
FUMP
ぎく
TWITCH
しゃく
STIFF
しゃく
STIFF
TWITCH
ぎく
Everyone is acting so unnatural...
STIFF
しゃく
TWITCH
ぎく
...being around me makes them calm.
I hope someday they feel like...
I hope so.
I wonder if we'll all be able to relax someday.
I want to try making the tomato soup I had here before.
Oh? Thanks, you're a lifesaver.
F-SHHH
Mom, let me help.

ドロ〜ン
M

Really?
I'm looking forward to it.

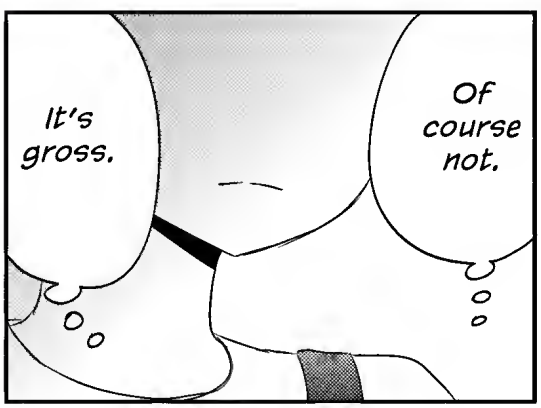
ゴクッ…!!…
GULP
*Wisdom
This feels familiar.


It looks... tasty... right?
Mom, you look scary.
SMILE

It's gross!
Yui! Don't say things like that!

...

TOK
カチャ


It's gross.
Of course not.

This time, I'll teach you...
I did promise, after all.
Mao-chan, come here.
CLATTER
カタッ

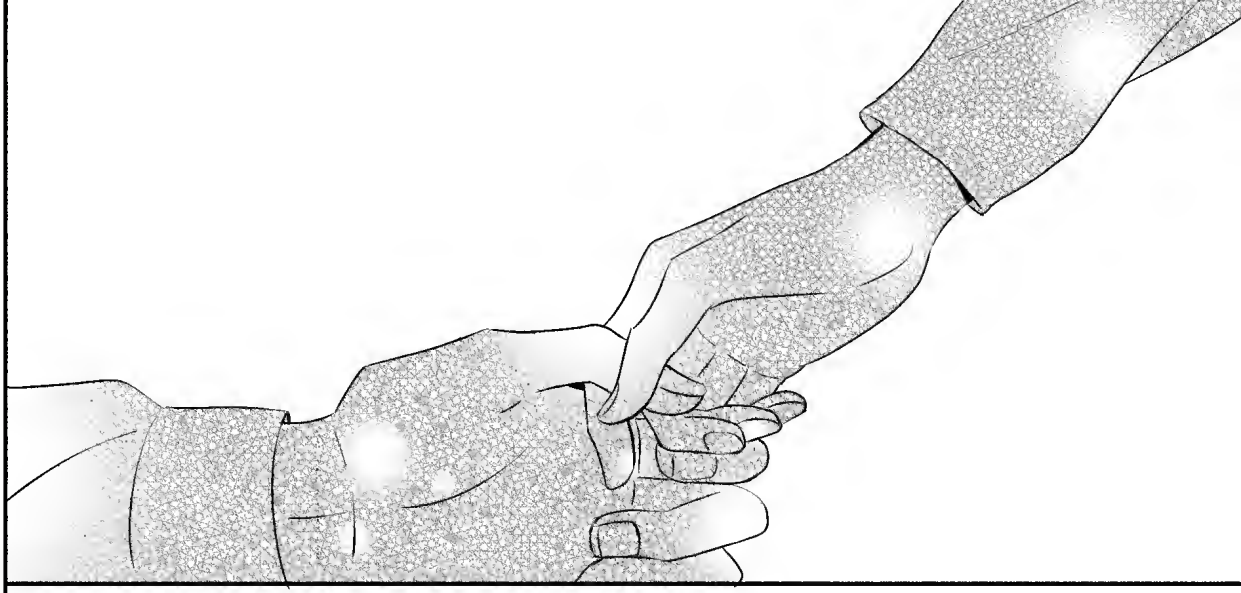
Okay!
Oh...

He won't eat it, will he?

It didn't turn out because you boiled the tomatoes too much.
Oooh!
Hold your knife this way.
Like this?
Yes.
Even the way you cut something can change the way it tastes, so be careful.
TK
Yes!
Okay, you try.
ちょん
TADUM
Let's try it one more time.
This is totally different from how Daiki and Hiro teach me.
I think maybe I can make something good.

Yeah.
...
OM
ぱく
Better than last time.
Good job, Mao-chan!
...
Thank you for eating it!

...
...
Dad and Mao are like middle schoolers in love!
Yui?! How old are you again?!
I hope you can...
...hurry up and be boyfriend and girl-friend.

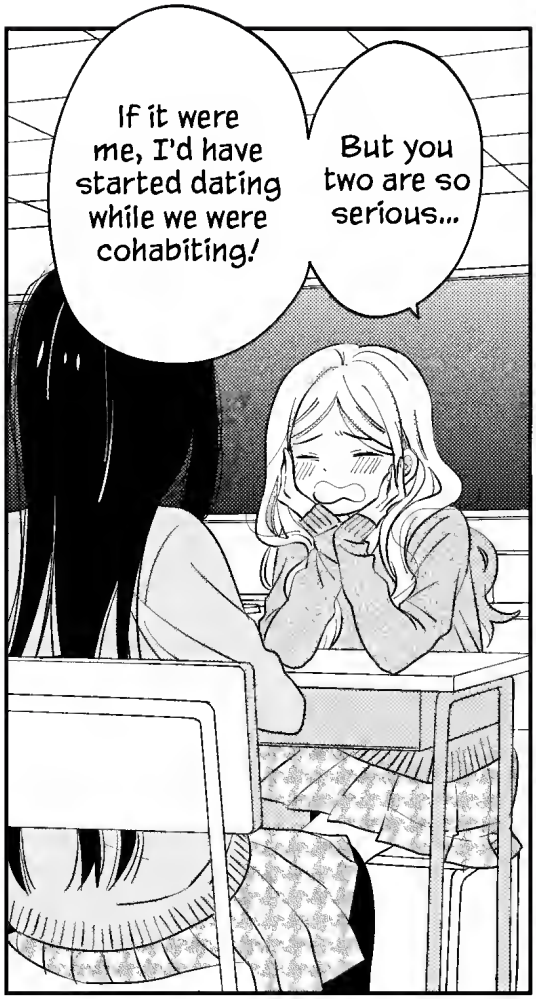


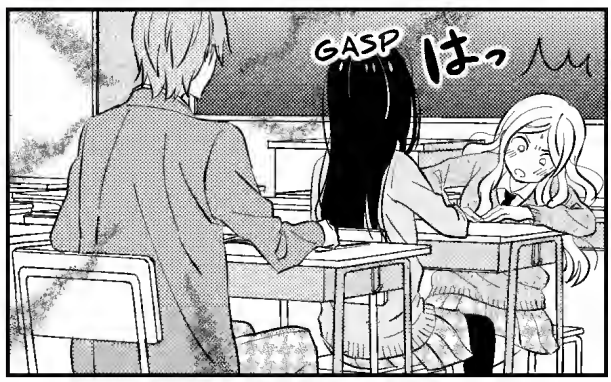
...for the first time in a long time.

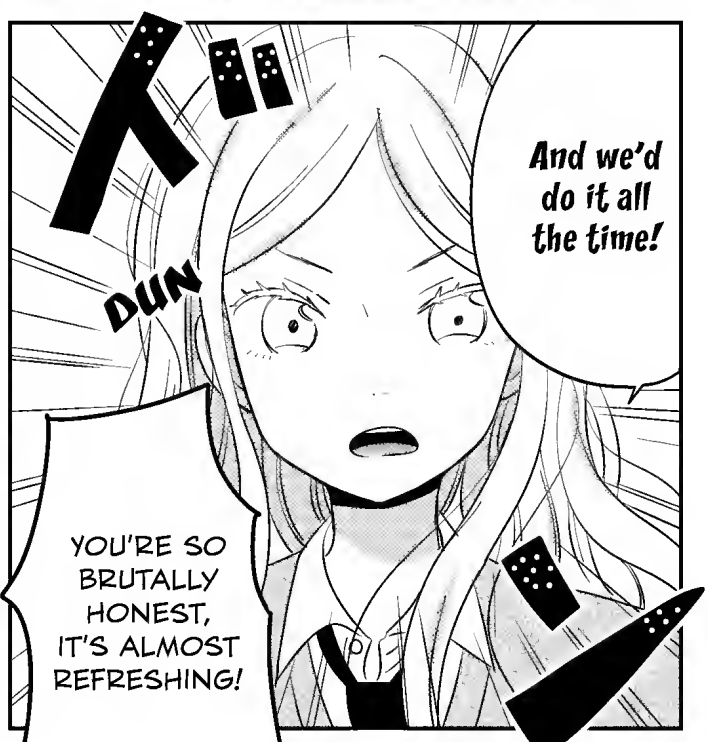
...I felt my father's warmth...

From our linked hands...

Now you're clear to start dating Hiro-san!
O-ouch! And you're too loud, Chi-chan!

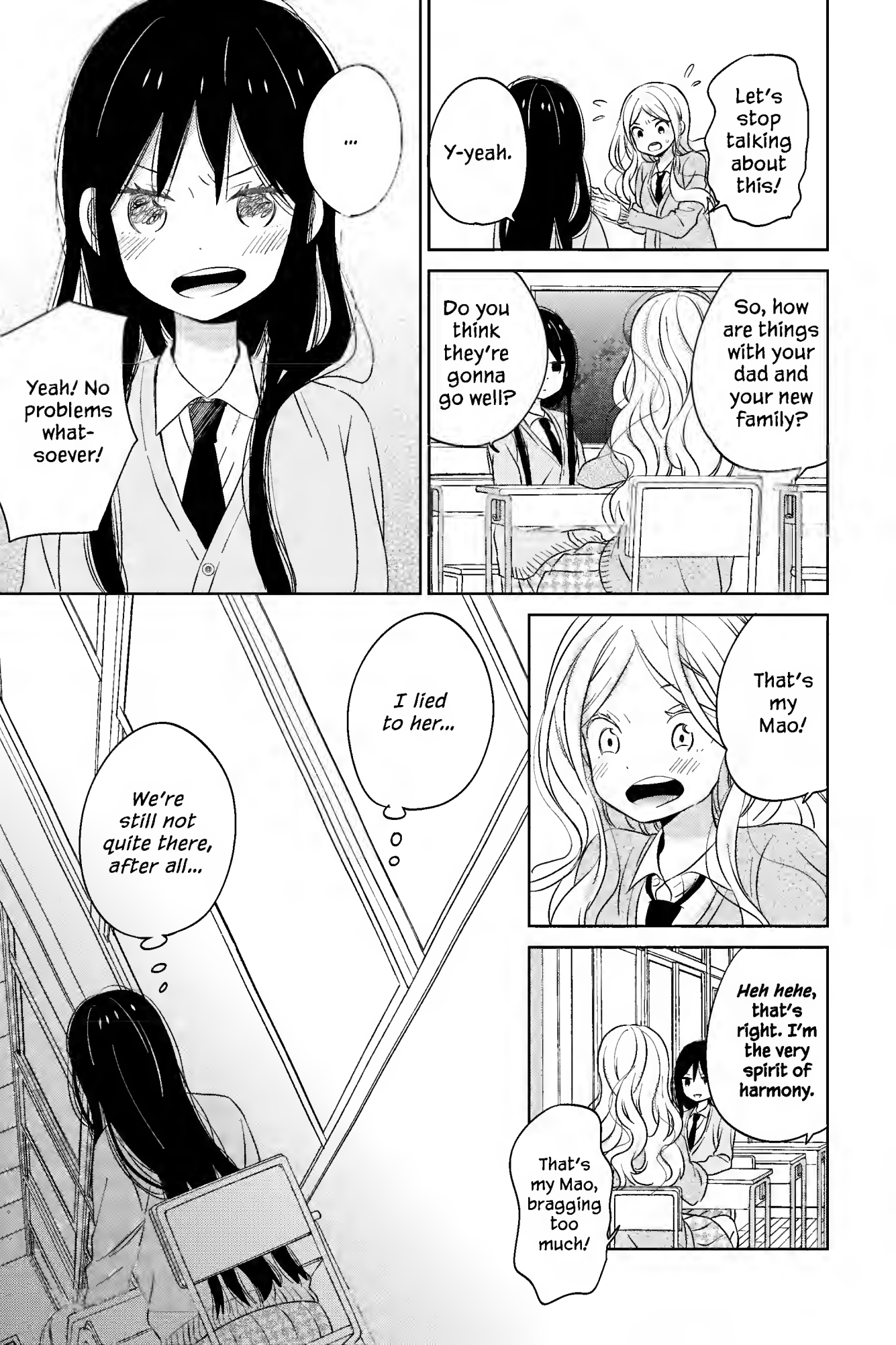

But you two are so serious...
If it were me, I'd have started dating while we were cohabiting!


GASP
はっ


And we'd do it all the time!
DUN
YOU'RE SO BRUTALLY HONEST, IT'S ALMOST REFRESHING!

I'M JUST JOKING. HONESTLY I'D BE WAY TOO BASHFUL...
Bash-ful's nice, too.
Stop keying into weird things.

But I actually did kiss Oda-kun...
!!
Hee hee hee ♡
Hee hee hee ♡
Oda, you bastard...
SHING
Congrats, good for you.
BLEHHH
Thanks! ♡
BUT BEING SEXUALLY FRUS-TRATED IS SOOO HARD!!
ARE YOU OKAY, MAO? ISN'T IT NUTS?! IT'S SO CRAZY!
DON'T YOU WANT TO GO FURTHER THAN A KISS?
You're too loud!
GASP はっ


...
Yeah! No problems whatsoever!
Y-yeah.
Let's stop talking about this!
Do you think they're gonna go well?
So, how are things with your dad and your new family?
I lied to her...
We're still not quite there, after all...
That's my Mao!
Heh hehe, that's right. I'm the very spirit of harmony.
That's my Mao, bragging too much!

I did.
But we were always together, just a little bit ago.
You just saw me in class.

Going home?
Ah! It's Daiki!
How are you?

Oh, yeah?! That's great.

We got a message from Hina saying her preparations for coming home are moving along.

There's no worries at home.
Since you left...
...dinner is great and it's so clean. It's the best.
...
...
I see.
Good for you.
No worries at my place either!
See you at work!
Later.

CLATTER
ガタタン
ガタタン
CLATTER
ガタタン
CLATTER
...but it looks like everything's going perfect at Hiro's place.
PSHHHH
プシュー
I was a little bit worried...
I'm glad.
I really am.
I'm home.

You missed it here that much already?
WAAAAH!

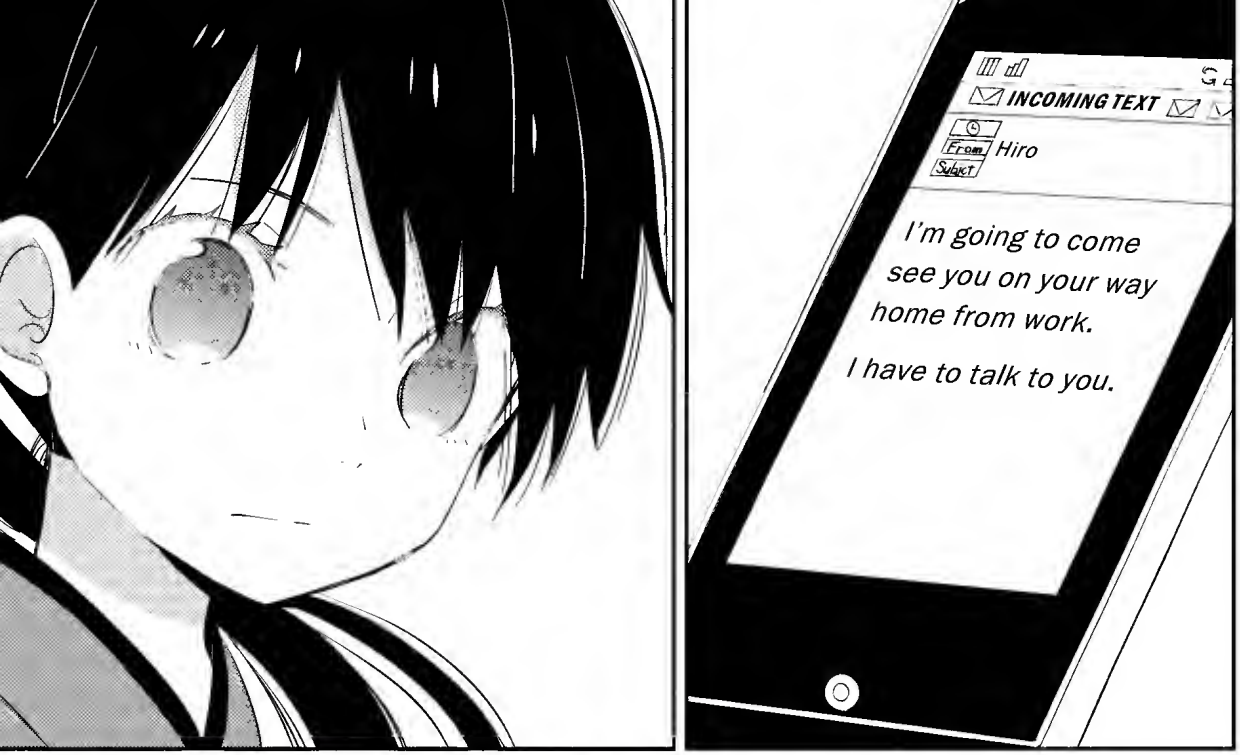
I just made a mistake!
I swear!
I'll take Croquette on a walk and go home!
I'm home.
Welcome home!
There's *senbei* crackers.
I'll have some!
But I have to go to work in a little bit.

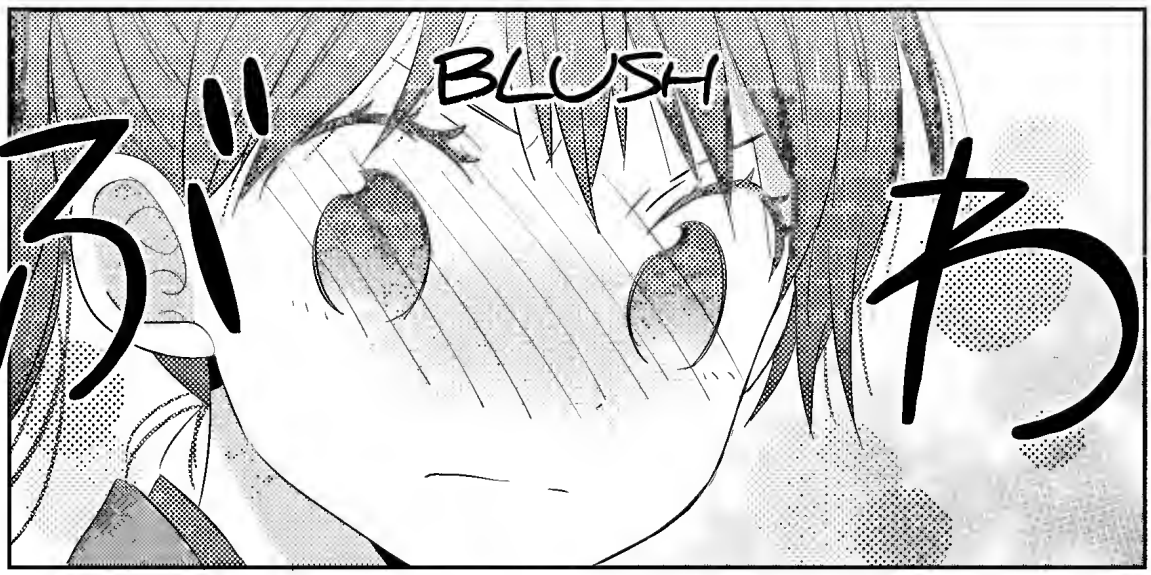
You'll be taking college exams soon, and I'd really rather you quit.
Do you need more allowance?
Do you have to keep working there?
You work at a bar and restaurant part-time, right?
Uh...
Oh... I see.
If you'd like to start working part-time after you get into college, then maybe you can then?
I never even thought about quitting.

Okay?
Wh-what's wrong?
I dunno.
You...
...were being very mom-like.

I am your mom.
There are exams.
You think so, too, Daiki?
And you have parents, unlike me.
Doesn't that mean you have to quit?
...
Sorry.

...
But you don't have a reason for a job now, do you?
I wasn't saying it out of self-pity.
But I'll be sad I won't get to see you and the crew as often.
I guess.
Well, I'm going now.
'Kay.
Maybe we'll meet at college prep classes.
I'm going to be quitting soon, anyway.
It's Hiro.
Hiro will probably tell me to quit, too.
FWIP
BNNNNN


INCOMING TEXT
From
Hiro
Subject
I'm going to come see you on your way home from work.
I have to talk to you.


BLUSH
ぶわっ

...think of one topic.
I can only...
Talk?
Talk?

Hey.
Hey.
It took a while... Did you wait?
I DID. I WAITED SOOOO LONG.
Sorry ...
Just kidding.
Wanted to tease you.
Bully-ing?!

SQUEEZE
Like elementary school kids bully their crushes.
HUFF
I'll take you home.

...definitely...

I-it's going okay!
How are things at home?
...
Going well?
...I see.
But if I know you, it'll be okay.
Actually, it's still a little awkward.
My mom told me I should quit my job.
I could be honest with Hiro.
...

Yeah.

Everyone's saying that 'cause they worry about me.

You should.

High schoolers shouldn't have to work.

Huh?

To relax a little.

Want to go somewhere tomorrow?

It looks like your shoulders are still pretty stiff.
Yeah.
...
Mao...

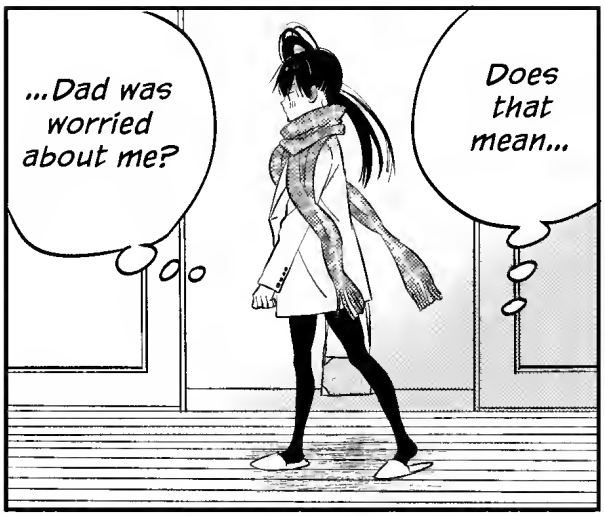
I told you I had something to talk to you about.
I...

WAAAAAAHHHH!
WAAAAA!
WAAHHHHHH!
Tomor-row!
Let's do it tomor-row!
...
Tomor-row?

I can't, not today! I'm filthy from work, and my clothes are just slapped together!
My heart isn't ready yet!
I'll just explode!
Then let's make plans to rendezvous tomorrow.
Well, we can't have you explod-ing...
Right?! I'd go every-where!
Rendez-vous?
Yeah, you like that word, don't you?
Tomor-row...
...make sure your heart is ready.

You're late...!

If you're going to be coming home this late, you better quit that job ASAP!



I'm so happy.

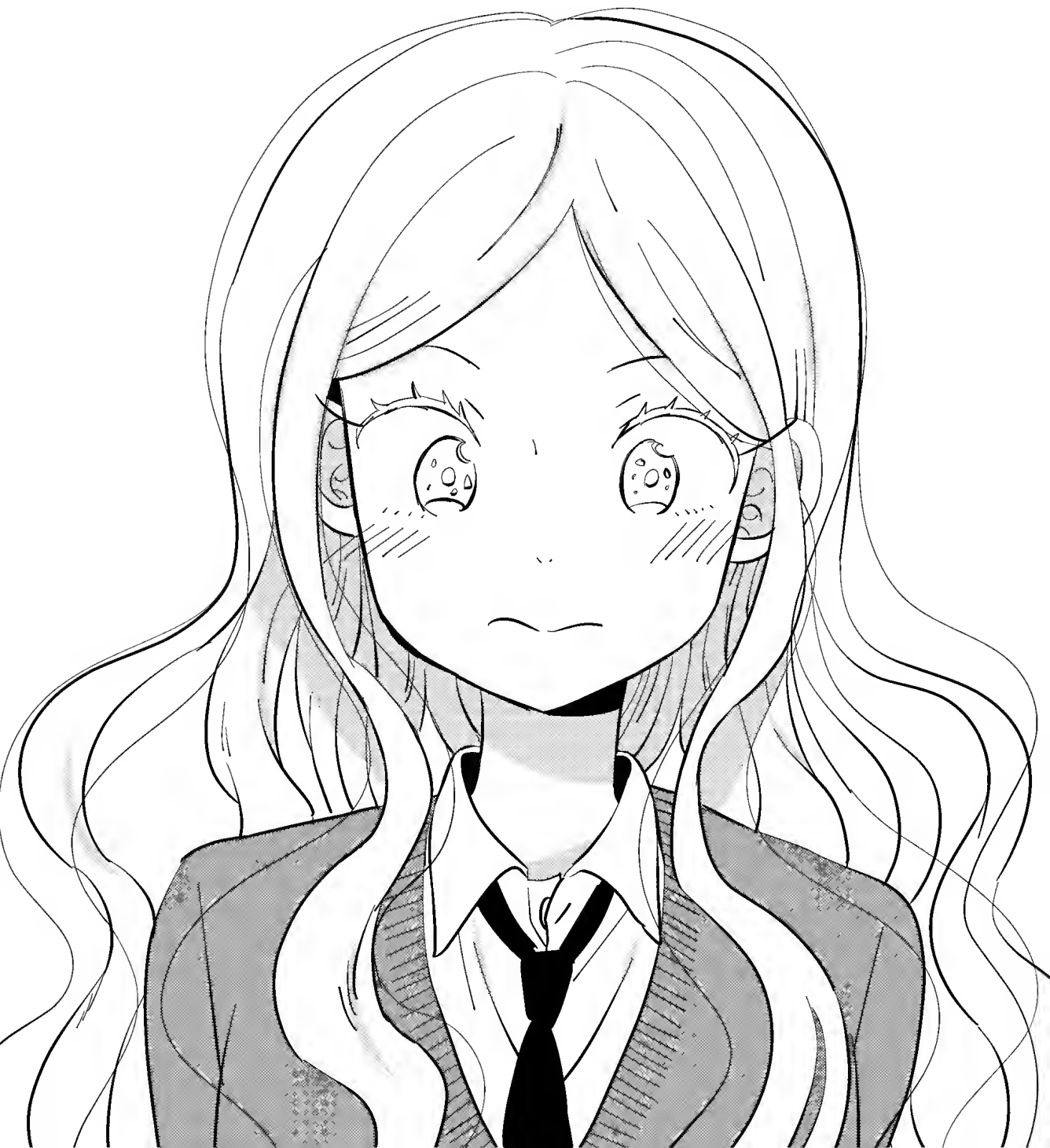
So this is what joy feels like.

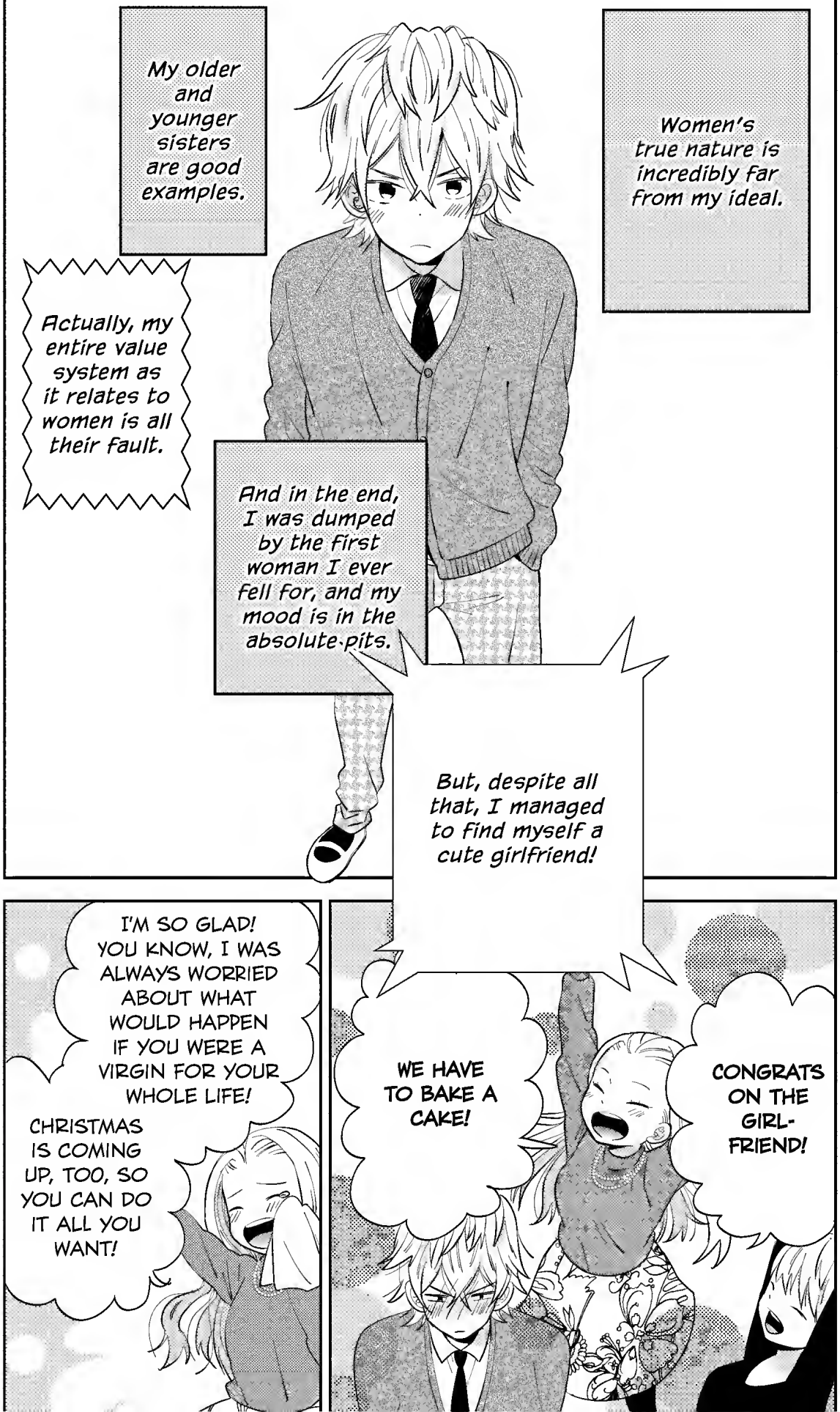
Maaao!
It's been a while!
It's me, your mom.
To be continued...

SPECIAL EXTRA CHAPTER

Rabbit and Mirage

I took *Rabbit and Mirage* as my chance to draw a romance comic without Hiro and Mao in it. I hope you enjoy it!




My older and younger sisters are good examples.
Women's true nature is incredibly far from my ideal.
Actually, my entire value system as it relates to women is all their fault.
And in the end, I was dumped by the first woman I ever fell for, and my mood is in the absolute pits.
But, despite all that, I managed to find myself a cute girlfriend!
I'M SO GLAD! YOU KNOW, I WAS ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WERE A VIRGIN FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE!
CHRISTMAS IS COMING UP, TOO, SO YOU CAN DO IT ALL YOU WANT!
WE HAVE TO BAKE A CAKE!
CONGRATS ON THE GIRL-FRIEND!

Boys are total animals in high school, after all.
Seriously, stop it! It's not like that!
I'm super pure!
And Chihiro's not gross like you guys are!
What do you mean, "what"?
Are you being serious?
If you're not that interested in having sex with her, then what do you like about her?
Plus, you just got turned down.
Because she's cute?
Hmmm ...
What do I like about her?
And when did it start?
Oh, this is bad. Now I'm not sure...
You just wanna do it!
Just admit it!
No, that's not what I meant!
No, that's not it! Even though I do!
Am I just dating her because I want to have sex...?

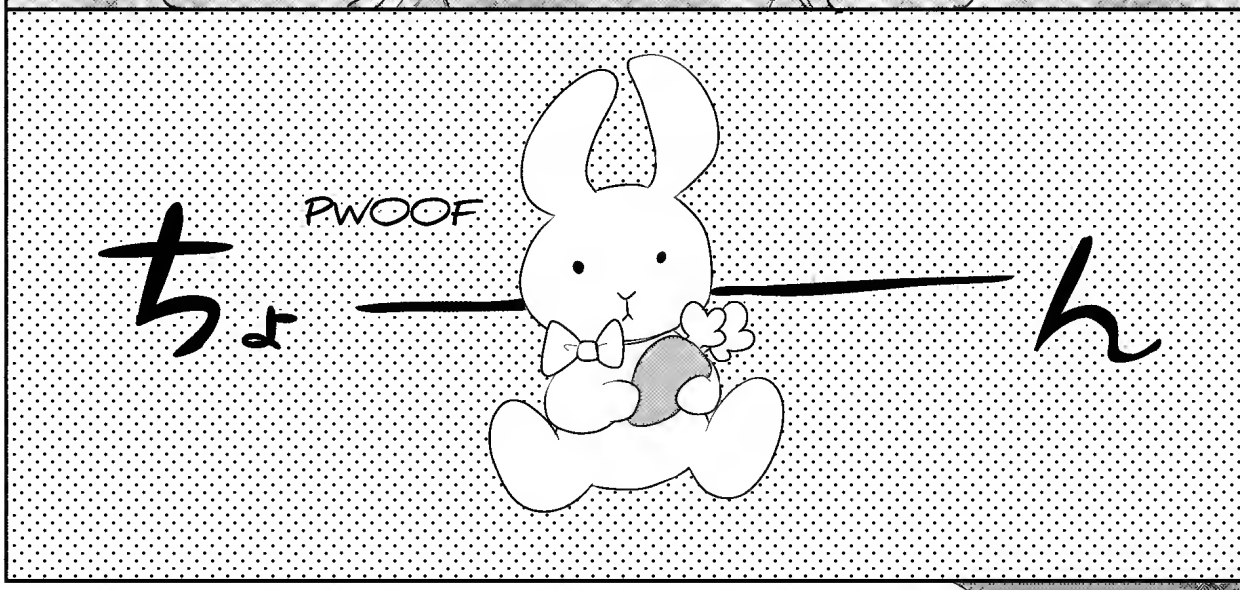
I was trying to figure out why people like people!
SHING
What's that face for?
Do it all you want!
Christmas?!
Oda-kun... What are you doing for Christmas?
Uh...
I'm not doing anything!

A Christmas date, huh?

Then that means I'm obviously going to have to get her a present.

After hearing so many women complain every year...

He gave me a video game and said he wanted to play it together. I'm exchanging it for cash!
...I'm concerned.
This accessory is super gaudy. I'm gonna exchange it for cash!
He gave me cash. He can't be serious?!
This lounge set is super ugly. I'm exchanging it for cash!


PWOOF
ちょ——ん

When I saw it, I thought it was cute.

Wh... What is that? Don't tell me that's a Christmas present...?!
ぞっ
SHUDDER

I thought since it wasn't something to wear, it'd be okay.
SCARY!

RIGHT?
If it were me, I'd think of that kind of girl the minute I got a stuffed animal as a gift.
It's that bad?

NO GIRL SLEEPS WITH A STUFFED ANIMAL THESE DAYS. IF SHE DOES, YOU MIGHT WANT TO EXORCISE HER.
Don't talk about exorcism.

Asking... When did I fall for her?
What parts of her do I love...?
I just want to put that all aside for now.

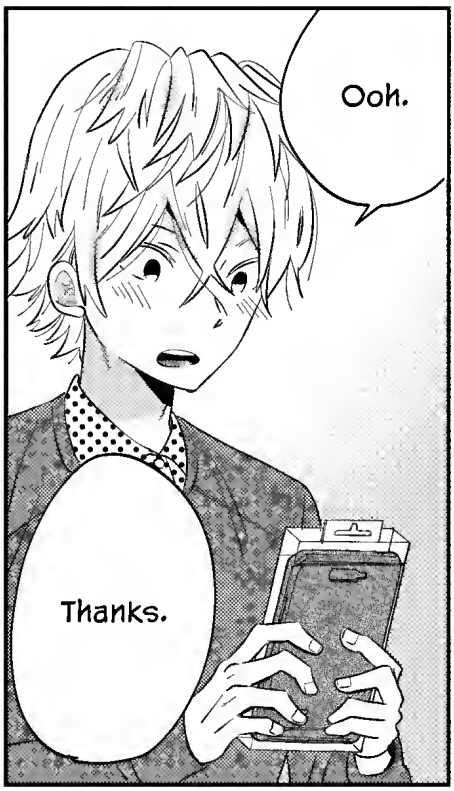
I just want to think of her as normal.
Don't group Chihiro in with you guys!
I've already got all these weird ideas about women...

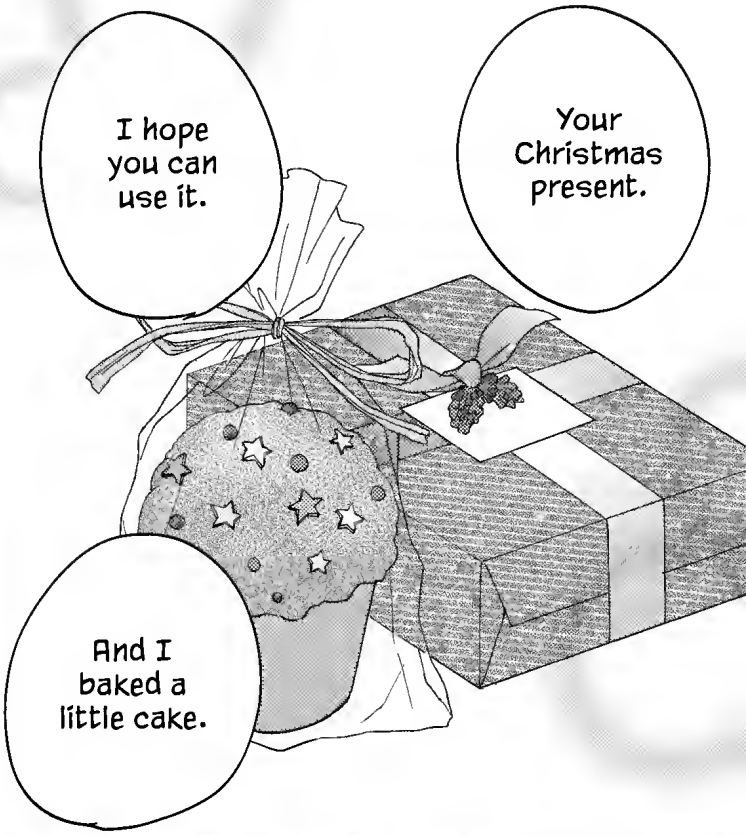
She is my first girlfriend, after all.

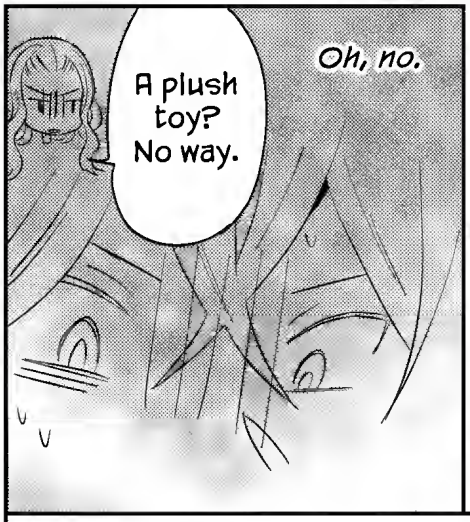
Wha...
You look like you're in love.
So you like that stuff?
Hmm ...
Ooh, yeah.
It's cute.
With that plush.
You've been staring at it.
Tonight, we're only serving our special Christmas courses.
CHRISTMAS DINNER MENU
Wh... So, then, that's a bad sign, right?

EXPENSIVE!
We went to a bunch of places, but it was all pricey Christmas menus.
Y-yeah.
GROWWWL
L-let's just give up...
DOKKIRI PINKY
Wanna go there...?
POOPY!
WA HA HA HA
WA HA HA HA
I'm sorry.
I didn't research well enough, and that's why we're here.
That's Christmas for you.
There are a lot of families here.

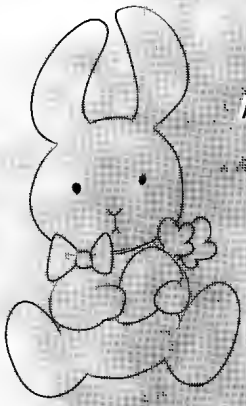
Yeah!
The food here's good, so don't worry.
Let's eat.
Can I... go over there?
...
N-NO! DON'T COME OVER HERE!
WHAAAAAAT?!
I'm sorry ...
It is Dokkiri Pinky, I guess...
Oh, right! Before I forget...
Here.
ガサガサ
FSH
FSH
FSH





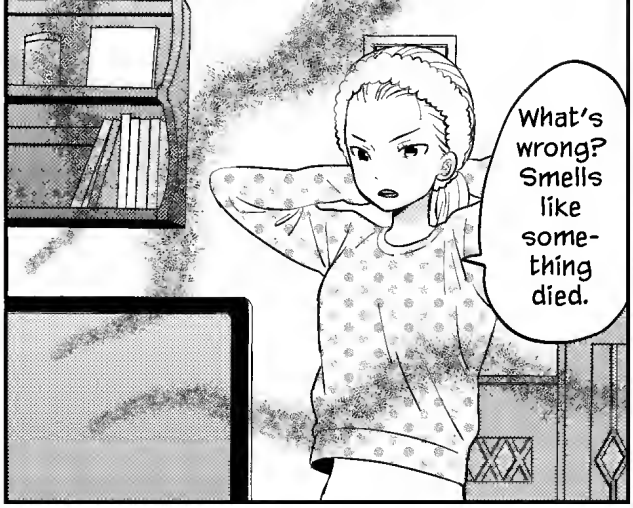


I can't give her this.



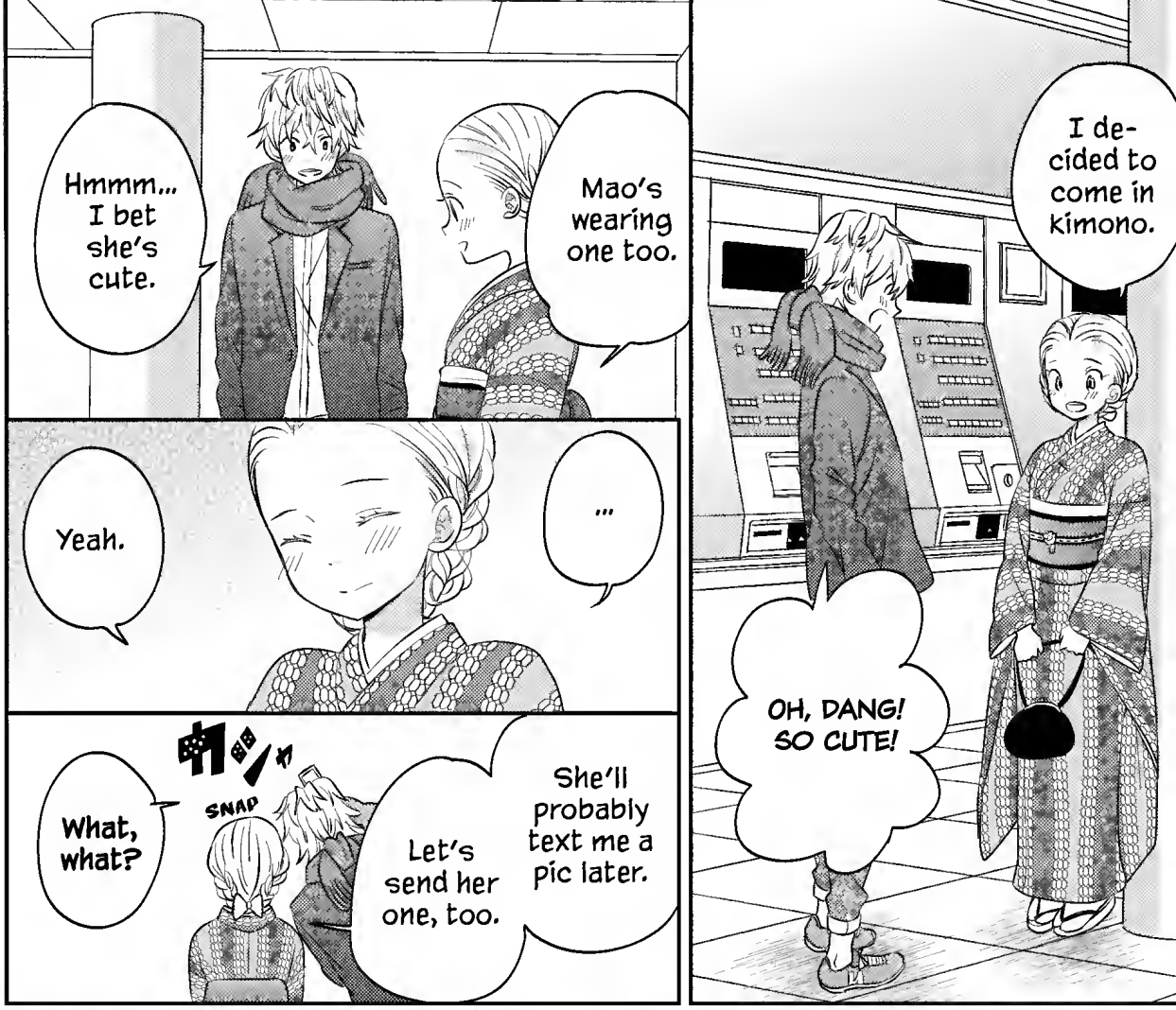
Plus, just now Chihiro saw that plush and laughed.

Um?
ACTUALLY...
...I DON'T HAVE A PRESENT.
I was going to pay for dinner as my gift...
I thought money would probably be the best.
O-oh...
Thank you.
So cheap!
Is this okay for Christmas?!
DOKKIRI PINK
Receipt
12/24
Reg. Salisbury Steak - ¥1050
Pressed Tofu Salisbury Steak - ¥840
SUBTOTAL : ¥1890
SALES TAX: ¥90
TOTAL ¥1890
Paid 2000 yen
Change 110 yen
BING
*About $17.



ドドド

I thought I was popular...
People think I'm so cool, and they're always saying I understand a woman's feelings.
But my brain just locks up when it's the girl I like.
Are you being serious right now?
Y-yeah...
That's all!
The reason you're popular is because you have a good face!
The rest of you is an idiot!
DONG
Chihiro must not feel that way!
Hello.
It's so cold.


I decided to come in kimono.
OH, DANG! SO CUTE!
Mao's wearing one too.
Hmmm... I bet she's cute.
...
Yeah.
She'll probably text me a pic later.
Let's send her one, too.
SNAP
What, what?

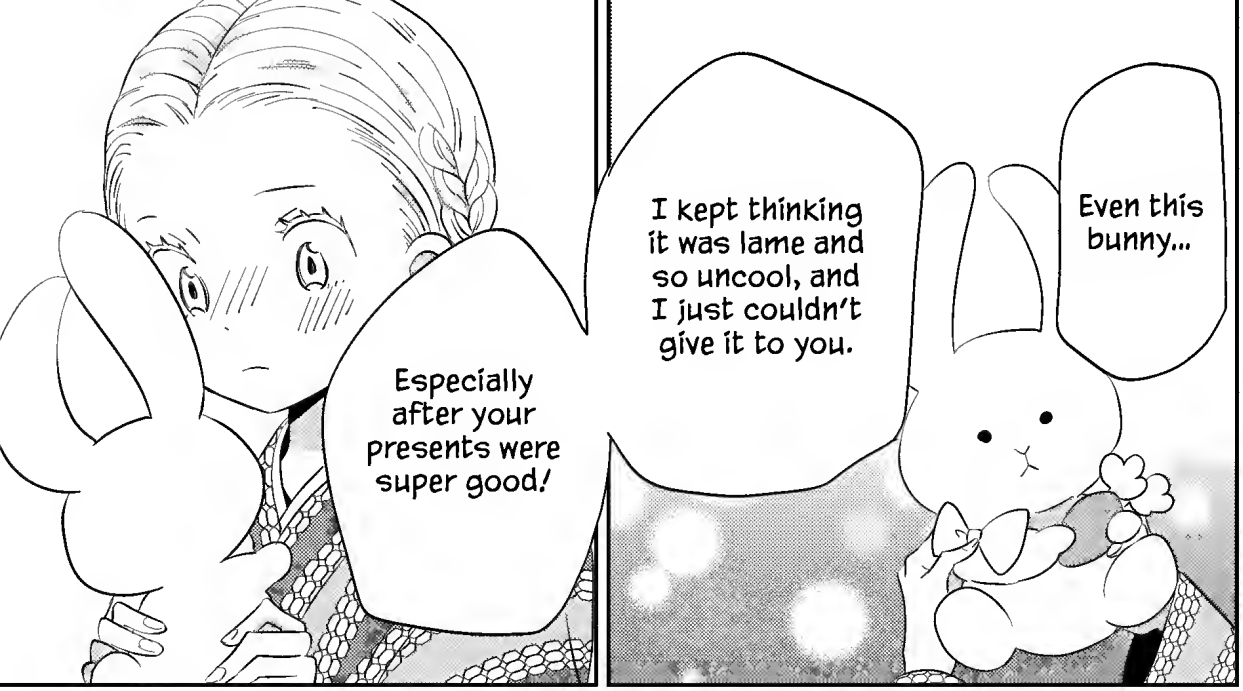
It's super crowded.
MURMUR
MURMUR
ざわ
ざわ
You can't let your kimono get messed up, so it'd probably be rough to go in, huh.

Why not? It's very cute and perfect for New Year's.
I shouldn't have worn it.
Really?
I screwed up Christmas, so...
...I decided to go all out this time.
All right, let's hold hands and head out, then...
Only...
うずうず
NERVOUS
Do you want to hold hands and go?
HUH?!
NO, UH...
S-SORRY!

No, I'm the one who's sorry.
You still like Mao...
...and I'm sure you don't want to touch me at all.
I'll try...
...as hard as I can to get you to really fall for me, okay?

I really am the biggest idiot.
What I like about her...
...doesn't have anything to do with her purity.
Who even...
...cares about that stuff?

ぶちゃ
FWUMPH
I actually want to do stuff like that with you!
Huh?!
I like you, so I was holding back...!
Because I like you!


Even this bunny...
I kept thinking it was lame and so uncool, and I just couldn't give it to you.
Especially after your presents were super good!

...want to cuddle and kiss.
...Not with this bunny, though.
With the idiot, Oda. A lot.

In other words, I hurt you because I was over-thinking like an idiot.
I'm sorry ...!

But I'm really...
...happy you gave him to me.

You know, I...

...hold back anymore.

And I won't...

...more?

Extra Chapter/End

EXTRA CHAPTER

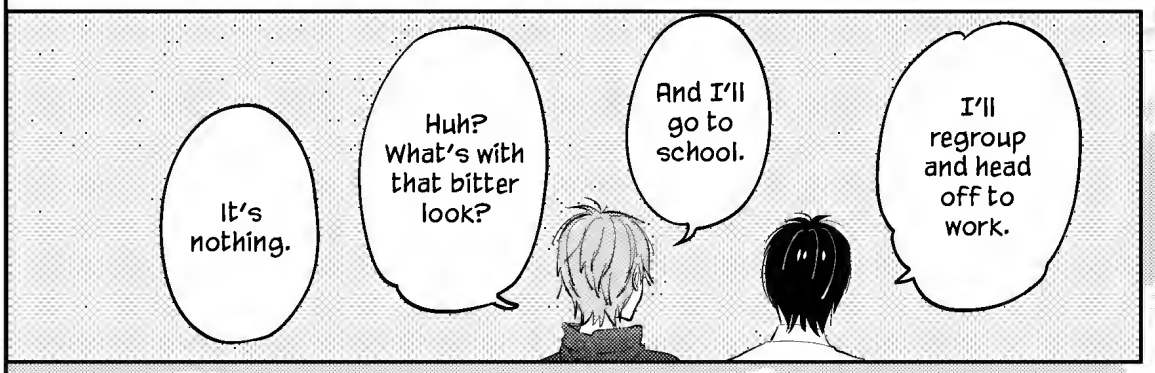
No Girls at Home

ANYTHING
てきとー
You gonna have breakfast?
Yeah. Anything's fine.
I didn't really feel like cooking anything today.
Just today? That's how it's been lately.
...
You didn't do much, huh?
Thanks for the food.
Thanks.
CHMP
モグ
CHMP
モグ
CHMP
モグ
...
モグ
CHMP

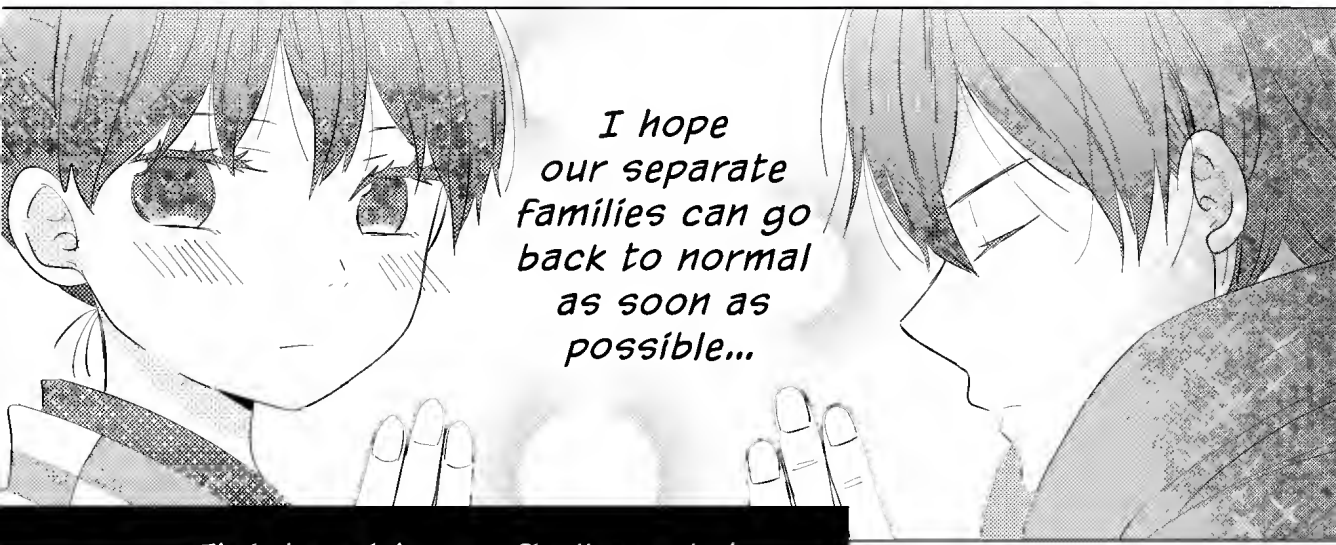
Have we been kind of lazy lately?
Yeah, we gotta shape up.
You know, Hiro, you haven't taken the wash yet.
Oh yeah...!
But you forgot today's garbage day, didn't you?
Oh.
...
You busy at work?
Nah. I mean, no more than usual.
All right, on Sunday, let's clean the whole place.
I found a bunch of stuff Mao forgot, so we have to send it or bring it over.
Did she really think she was packing everything when she left?
She forgot a lot of stuff.
Yep.

Even this bowl is hers.
I guess.
...
Well, that's all right.
She can just use it when she comes back here.
SIGHH
ふー
SIGH
はー
That's the pot calling the kettle black.
It's not like we'll never see her, so stop your sighing.

It was brighter here with Mao around.
TMP
ﾅﾅ..!



Extra Chapter/End



Their two wishes are finally granted...

All of the things worrying both Hiro and Mao have finally disappeared...

The time when the two of them will make their feelings known publicly has come...

OR SO WE THOUGHT?!

HOUSE of the SUN 12

Popular right now!

House of the Sun 11

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